

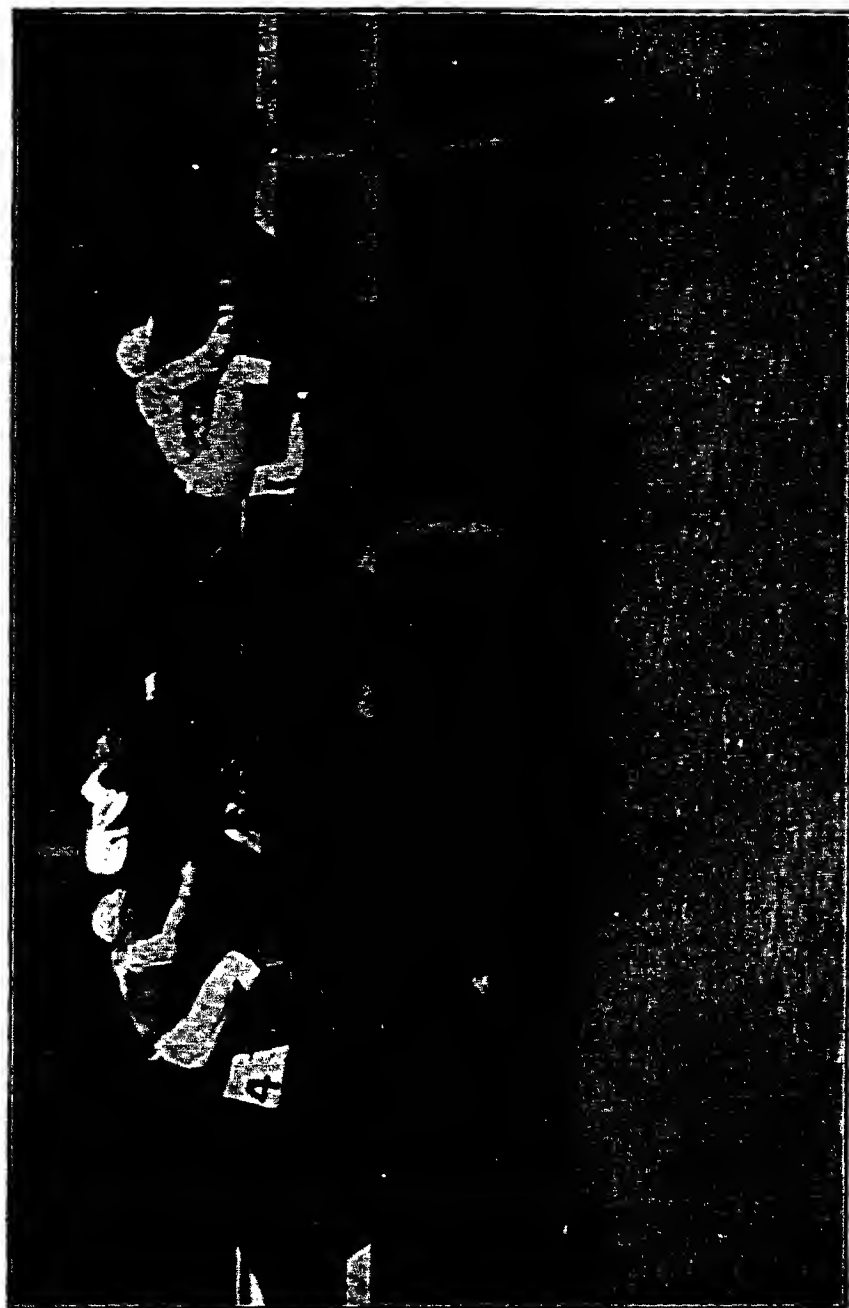
BRAVE HEARTS



W·A·FRASER

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BRAVE HEARTS



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THE FINISH

BRAVE HEARTS

BY

W. A. FRASER

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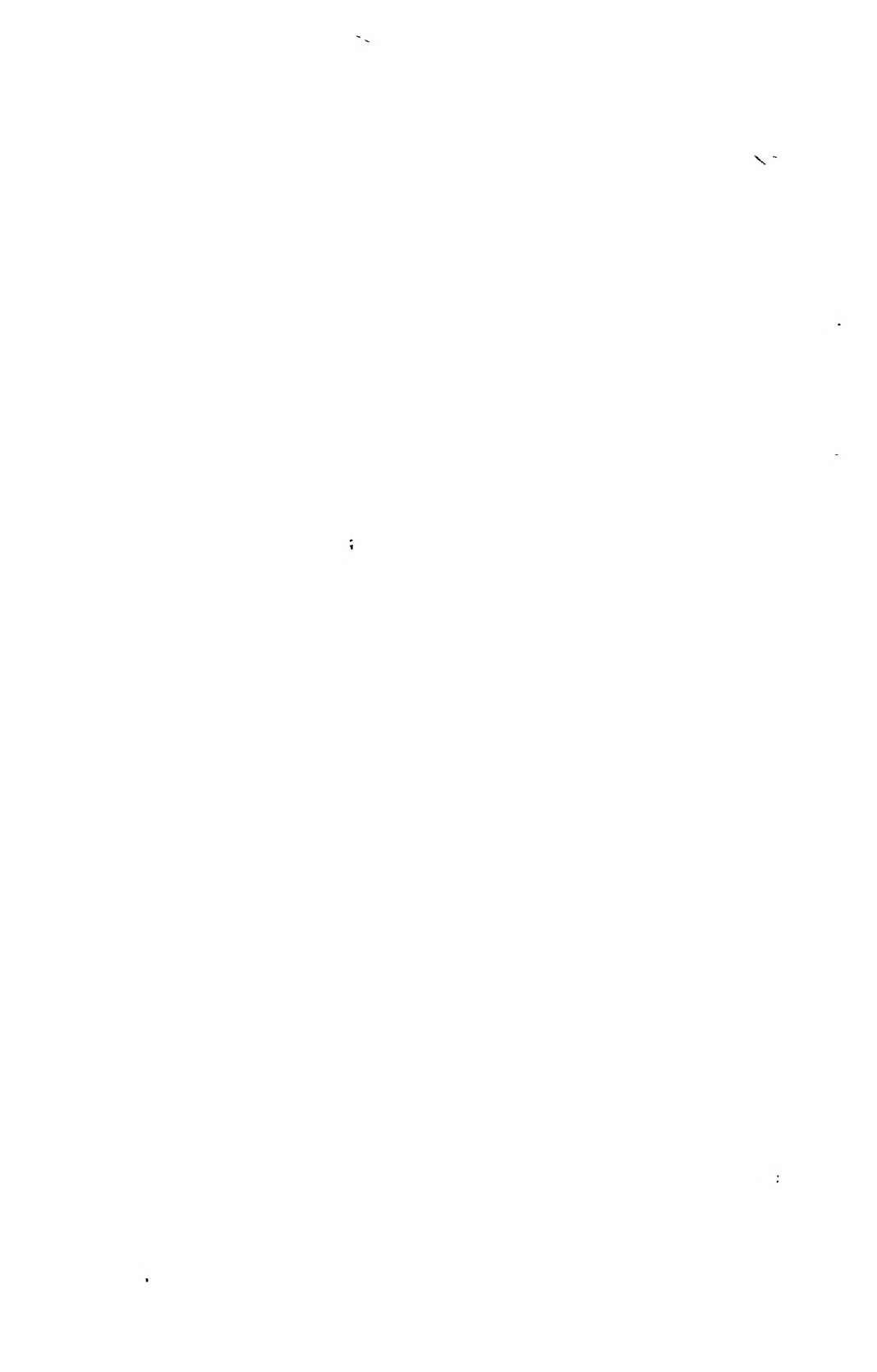
The gallant bay, Brave Heart, that won the "Foxbrook" at Saratoga, so typically embodies the game qualities of thorough-breds in general, that I have pluralized his name as an embracing title for this collection of race-horse stories.

W. A. F.

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BRAVE HEART



Brave Heart

ONE August evening in Saratoga a slender, dark-faced man wrote his name in the register of the Universal.

"Thought you were leaving us, Mr. Hedley," the clerk said, swinging the huge book around.

Then he gave a low whistle, stammered "Beg pardon, sir," and as the guest moved away in charge of a page, muttered: "*Adam Begg—Toronto!* Their mothers wouldn't know them apart. Toronto, eh? Gad! the races bring them from all over— Saratoga's the greatest ever, now!"

At seven o'clock Adam Begg reappeared in the rotunda. It was like a beehive; the walls vibrated with the buzz of loud voices, and the lights picked out countless jewels that blared back like angry stars from the bare-shouldered women and white-breasted men. Beyond, on the veranda of the quadrangular court, a band played an exquisite march, but the jewel-bedecked humans drowned it to nothing with their harsh voices.

Just behind Adam a voice said, "He'll win in a

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walk, I tell you." In front of him a stout, red-faced man was saying: "He's seven pounds better than the other one; he'll be five to one to-morrow, and it'll be like getting money from home." It was a woman's voice—at least it had been in her younger days—that came in a thick mezzo from the ceiling, or the cellar, or the wine vault, with: "He's been saved for this—he's never been meant once—and Burns rides him." Some softer voice must have tendered an objection, for the mezzo broke in, pitched a little higher, "That skate! he's a tram horse—he owes me a trip to Europe."

"Somewhat of a racy atmosphere," Begg whispered to himself. "It's all right, but I don't want to eat horse. I wish I could crawl off to a club—even a station restaurant would be nice and quiet in comparison."

A wedge of humanity pushed up the rotunda between the two desks, and Adam was brushed to one side and anchored firmly between two men and a large, ponderous dame, upon whose fleshy neck and shoulders diamonds clung like dewdrops on a mound. A man, swept along in the living stream, touched Begg on the arm as he floated by, and gasped, "Hello, Hedley!"

"Such a mob!" the corporate woman grunted. "Let's dine at Cranford's, Jack? I had a dream last night that thirteen turned up three times."

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"Lay against it, then," Jack retorted. "But I'll go you on the dinner question."

That saved Adam's life; he was released a compressed tablet. A button was gone from his coat, he had been halloed at as Hedley—but also Cranford's sounded promising. Begg waited at the door, and as the woman who had suggested Cranford's came out with her companion, he followed at a respectful distance. Down the hollow past the springs, a turn to the left, then sharp to the right, through the well-kept garden, to the side door which ushered them into a reception-room.

"Just a little quiet touch of heaven," Begg muttered, his spirit soothed by the atmosphere of rest. "And there'll be a good dinner," he continued, as he noted pictures of real merit on the walls.

"The dining-room? This way, sir."

A quiet-mannered, courteous servant. Yes, certainly, it was all a dream.

Begg floated in through the door which was held open, and, more good fortune, on his left, in the cozy corner by the window, was a small table vacant. With a sigh of satisfaction he sank into the chair the waiter drew back, and muttered softly, "I love that resplendent fat woman."

The door behind which he sat had an awkward habit of swinging around the table like a screen. Each time Begg caught himself watching for the

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manifest individuality of the force that thrust it open.

"Expecting a friend, sir?" the attentive waiter asked, observing the guest's involuntary anxious look. "Shall I turn up the other chair?"

"Thank you!" and its back leaned against the table, ensuring a comforting privacy.

The door cut Begg's soliloquy with a little jar of the chair, and his eyes raised to fall upon a face that beamed in happy recognition. It was a striking face; the smooth, healthful pallor of an Italian graced it with a restful evenness; large, full, black eyes asserted themselves agreeably through a pair of gold-rimmed glasses; intense black hair massed the pallid face like a Rembrandt background; a voice carrying the varnish of culture said pleasantly, "Ah! Mr. Hedley—dining alone?"

The waiter, conscious that the expected friend had arrived, drew the chair back, the new-comer took it with a little bustle of content, and Begg's dream of solitariness was dispelled.

"I'm in luck to get a seat," his *vis-à-vis* continued. The menu occupied the speaker's attention, or perhaps he might have observed dissent in Begg's eyes.

"Waiter," he continued, "bring me something to eat—anything. Yes, yes, a bird—that will do; and a bottle of Pommery. Bring the wine first,

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please—I'm thirsty. We'll split it, eh?" and he nodded with a smile at the man from Canada, who was Hedley beyond all dispute.

"Heard you were going to New York—did you get my message?" and he beamed across the table inquiringly.

"You are mistaken—" Begg began, but the other interrupted him with:—

"Of course—evidently; you couldn't very well get to New York and back in a couple of hours. But I'm not mistaken about the horse."

The clatter of an ice bucket interrupted the speaker. The waiter seized the yellow neck of the bottle and stepped behind Begg; but the flow of wine was prohibited by a hand across the glass.

"Not taking any?" Begg's generous friend asked.

"No, thank you; I prefer plain 'polly.' "

"Taking off weight, eh? That's right. You look heavier than usual; should think it would bother you to ride hundred and fifty-four—that's what Brave Heart carries in the Foxbrook, isn't it?"

At last the interesting episode had come to a point where Adam Begg felt called upon to explain that he wasn't one Hedley—evidently a jockey; but at that moment two people rose from a table on the left with a little distraction of noise.

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As the lady stood for a second adjusting a gauzy lace film about her shoulders, her face swung toward Begg, and their eyes met. Whoever he was, Hedley or Begg, the girl was certainly Rosalind Lester—unless she had changed her name since a year ago. This after-thought cut Begg like a knife.

He could see her face flush. She took an irresolute step toward him, then checked herself suddenly; the rose color faded, and with an almost imperceptible bow she slipped quietly past, and the door swung closed, stilling the rustle of her skirts. There was the shadow of a quizzical smile in the pallid face as its owner said softly: "I see—I didn't observe Miss Lester. You will join me in a glass *now* I trust. I must confess I timed you from the wrong quarter-pole, and it's seldom John Pierce makes a mistake."

Begg started at the "Miss Lester." There was a faint hope in his heart that perhaps he had been mistaken in the girl's identity—identities seemed of so little moment in Saratoga, individualities so nebulous.

Apathetically Begg allowed the waiter to pour in his glass wine for Hedley. By sheer attrition he was being beaten into a state of indifferent complaisance. He had been on the point of claiming his birthright as Adam Begg, now they might have

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it for a mess of pottage—a glass of Pommery. He had been squeezed like a red herring between people who bristled with diamonds; he had been reincarnated as Hedley, a jockey; a pair of eyes he had travelled far to look into once again had frozen him with a cold look of faint recognition.

Pierce's voice cut Begg's meditation with: "What does the Judge think about it?"

Begg sipped his wine deliberately. An inspiration crinkled in its glittering beads, and he answered diplomatically: "I haven't seen him for a few days."

"Haven't seen—why, he was with his sister; he nodded to you."

"Stupid of me, I didn't notice him."

"Under the circumstances not stupid at all, Mr. Hedley."

There was an unnecessary inflection of meaning in the speaker's voice that affected Begg disagreeably; it seemed to imply an interest on his, Mr. Hedley's, part in Miss Lester, of making him oblivious to the presence of others. Inquiringly he said: "I fail to understand."

Pierce smiled enigmatically. "The public are saying—" He stopped, lifted his glass, and continued: "My compliments, Mr. Hedley."

"But the public are saying——?"

Brave Heart

"That Mr. Hedley is a fortunate and exceedingly favored young man."

Begg's persistent curiosity had garnered for him a harvest of disquieting intimation. That was why Miss Lester had formulated a barrier between them with a well-bred iciness of recognition. He remained silent, absorbed in this unpleasant retrospection. Pierce, resting his arm on the table, tipped his clear-cut face toward Begg, and said: "They've gone, so I'll give you an answer about—Brave Heart"—he whispered the name. "My 'clocker,' Pietro, asked me not to send the horse out to my clients, as it would kill the odds against him. Pietro intimated—well, that *yours truly* would benefit by this suppression of form."

"Does Pietro's plan appeal to you, Mr. Pierce?" Begg asked, experimentally.

"Hardly. I've built up the firm of Adage & Bliss by sending out winners, not dead uns. I've got to stand by my clients, haven't I?"

"It's a wise course to pursue."

"Just so. Pietro timed Brave Heart over the full course in six twenty-four, pulling double and taking the jumps like a bird. You ought to know, you were in the saddle, Mr. Hedley."

"How do you know that?" Begg asked. In truth he had not been in a saddle for a month.

"Pietro's information. When he approached

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me about keeping the horse's form dark, I told him I couldn't do it. Pietro said someone was going to back Brave Heart for big money. I take it the someone was Mr. Hedley. I'm sorry I can't help you, but you'll get two to one—that's good enough for a sure thing."

Begg tabulated mentally, Pietro, Brave Heart, Hedley, the Judge. "Heavens! what a list; I'll blunder presently."

Pierce continued: "If I put the public away, and somebody makes a killing over Brave Heart at long odds, there'll be talk, and you might find it difficult explaining matters to Miss Lester. She'd rather see the public backing Brave Heart for the Foxbrook—all she wants is to have them like the big horse as well as she does."

"I think you're right, Mr. Pierce," Begg said, truthfully expressing his sentiments.

Pierce looked pleased, and added, "I'm sure I am. And of course you are most anxious to please Miss Lester."

"Undoubtedly."

"Are you going to have coffee—no? Neither am I. Shall we take a peep at the roulette room? They'll be busy there now."

Begg followed Pierce through the dining-room. There was something not altogether healthy about this business of Hedley's connection with Miss Les-

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ter's horse; Adam felt that he was justified in at least receiving information.

As he and his companion stood at the entrance to the roulette room looking at fate's eager devotees, a familiar voice came to him from a table on his left. Turning, he saw the large lady who had given him such an uncomfortable time in the rotunda of the hotel. She was saying to her companion: "Go in and play that dream for me, Jack."

"Play dreams and you won't have a bed to dream on—you'll camp out with Weary Willie," the man objected.

"Go on, Jack," she coaxed, "and wait till thirteen turns up; then put five on for a repeater; if it wins play five again, then quit. How much would that be if it won?"

Her companion took his pencil and figured on the menu card. "About three hundred and fifty."

"That's seventy to one against my dream—I'm going to play it. It wasn't like a dream, Jack; 'twas a sort of vision."

As they moved into the room Begg saw Jack take his place beside the roulette wheel. He had a languid curiosity to see what came of this peculiar system. It was not at all likely that fate would utilize a probable heavy late supper to disclose a short way to wealth.

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Presently the croupier drawled, "Thirteen—and black!"

The agent of the dream shoved a five-dollar bill on the square that bore the generally avoided number. The croupier pulled the note to the till, leaving a red chip in its place. Begg waited curiously. A brief moment of restfulness settled over the nervous throng about the table, and then somebody exclaimed, "A repeater!"

Thirteen had won again. The croupier languidly stacked thirty-five red chips in front of the hot-faced man who was muttering, "The dream's a cinch—it's a million to one on the sequence." In his exuberant faith Jack disregarded the dream-lady's wise admonition about playing another "five," and with trembling hands built an ivory monolith thirty-six chips high upon the wondrous square.

The croupier leaned over the table, and with a polite deprecating shake of the head, lifted part of the monument from its base and passed it to the player, saying: "Over the limit; you can play the corners, and black, and the row."

"Pardon me," and Jack, not to be denied of the grand *coup*, placed the tablets about the thirteen and on the black. He leaned over and took a hasty look at the wheel; a green compartment, holding the fatal zero, was next to thirteen. He littered

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single and double zero with the remainder of his chips and waited, resting one hand on the edge of the table.

The impassive-faced man behind the red-and-black checkered board gave his wheel a spin. The little ivory ball, impish sphere of destiny, raced with a hissing song round and round the groove that topped the swirling circle of little stalls below. Even as the wheel sped, with silent velocity as though it swam in space, eager hands, hot with desire, shoved yellow, and blue, and red symbols of gold on the numbered squares; the speeding wheel slackened its pace; the ivory arbiter of fortune raced down the slope impetuously; necks were craned—Begg noticed that Jack had climbed half-way up a stout gentleman's back in his eagerness to see what the pool of hidden treasure would give forth. There was a sharp click; then a dozen minor ones, as the inspired ball danced a devil's hornpipe from one numbered space to another. Would it never stop its tantalizing course and end the suspense?

There! at last! The black opening with the golden number "13" grasped the ivory that was like an evil spirit of unrest. It was in the black mouth; and then, without cause, it rolled over the partition and settled down comfortably.

"Thirty-six, red!" the croupier drawled, and

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Begg heard a gasp at his side as the pile of counters were swept away by the inexorable arm of the table's guardian.

"That's what bettors always get when they play fancies," Pierce remarked, sapiently. "My clients play knowledge, and they win. There's no beating the clock. I wonder what the stout party will say when Johnny-boy tells her he had a hundred and seventy-five to the good, and fell down in the home-stretch."

"She should have waked up before she finished that dream—just when thirteen turned up twice," Begg replied, as they crossed the room.

A half-circle of players sat around a table fronting a man whose face was like a plaster-cast impression of Nirvana.

As Begg turned from the long, bloodless hands that so methodically dealt cards from a little silver box, a player sitting at the end of the table sent a look of recognition from sharp, restless eyes, then deliberately winked. It was a strong face; intense concentration of thought had eroded ravines in the forehead, beside the prominent hawk nose, and at the meeting of the eyelids. One of the "Chosen People," Begg noted mentally.

Presently the player rose, saying to a neighbor, "Look after my chips, Joe; I'm going to get a drink."

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Again the small, brown eye blinked mysteriously at Adam, and, with an inviting toss of the head, the man sauntered from the gaming-room. Begg followed, wondering what his personality would be this time. The hawk-faced man was waiting in the reception-room.

"Good-evening, Mr. Hedley," he began.

"Oh, I'm still Hedley," Begg thought.

"Have you seen this new picture of Cranford's?" the other asked, moving to a corner, his eyes elevated to a brilliant blue "Grand Canal of Venice."

"Very fine, indeed; the water is particularly good," Adam commented, generalizing with safe broadness.

"The canoes is great!" the other man declared, indicating with his finger the gondolas. The art man cast a furtive look about the room, and continued, speaking low: "How'd you get on with him?"

"Oh, all right," Begg answered, wondering whether it was the Judge, or Brave Heart, or Pierce—or it might be even the little man who had played the dream.

"Did you talk him round?"

"I don't know yet." That was honest—he didn't know. He was on fairly slippery ground, he felt.

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"What'd you promise him?"

At last Begg was certainly at the end of his tether.

Promise who—promise what—was it money or a hiding—what was he supposed to promise?

"I'd rather not say," he answered with extraordinary wisdom.

"Oh, you needn't be afraid of me, Mr. Hedley; we're all in the same boat, we're out for the stuff—we don't have to look wise. What did Pierce say? Is he still bent on sending Brave Heart out to all the sucker bettors in the country?"

It was easy for Adam now; he had landed on his feet, thanks to the little man's impetuosity.

"Yes, he says he will."

"I knew he would. That fool clocker of his has just spoiled one of the best things that was ever known."

"Pietro, you mean," Begg suggested, just to show that he was Hedley.

"Yes, that fool Dago! In place of comin' to me first, he tells Pierce about the gallop, an' then gives it to me when it's too late. An' where am I at? I got to take just the same price as some bartender that buys Pierce's tips off in Oshkosh."

"It's too bad," Begg said, consolingly.

"Too bad! It's hell, that's what it is. Come on, let's go outside; here's some people comin'."

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The night air did not cool the hawk-nosed man's anger; in fact, he waxed hotter.

"Pietro told me Pierce wouldn't send his suckers out a dead one, but I thought when I saw you with him in there that p'raps you'd squared it."

"I couldn't."

"An' how're you goin' to pay me a thousand—your marker's been in my box for the whole meetin'—I can't do business that way—I got to pay out or get off the stool if there's a line of 'em reachin' to the paddock."

"I'm sorry, I'm sure," Begg said, as his irate friend waited for some explanation of his extraordinary conduct in not paying the money.

"You're sorry! That's rich. I booked to you because I thought it was Lester money you was bettin'. I didn't know you well enough to take your marker for a thousand. I heard you was goin' to marry the girl, an' I thought you was one of the family."

"I wish I were going to!" The words actually slipped from Begg. For a moment he forgot that he was Hedley.

"Well, what're you goin' to do about it?" the other asked, impatiently.

"What do you want me to do?"

"Damned if I can make you out. Have I got to go over the whole thing as though you was a

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kid? It's just this way: I'll give it to you straight—I want to get back into the game. When Pietro got on to your good gallop with Brave Heart and you found it out, you offered to make it worth his while to say nothin' about it; but you was too late, the Italian canary had given his boss a little song and dance about Brave Heart, an' you might as well advertise in the *Herald* what a horse can do as let Adage & Bliss catch on. Then the Dago comes to me to back the good thing, an' I sent him to feel Pierce. By God! I offered him a cool five thou' to rub Brave Heart's name out of his telegrams—it's no use. Then I sends Mr. Pietro to you—you're mad at the prospect of takin' two to one when you look fer tens, an' gives the Dago the straight office that Brave Heart struck himself an' the other one 'd beat him."

"What other one?" Begg asked, seeing an opening for more information. The voluble Bookie was a jewel, he would soon know all about the dacoity.

"What other one? You make me tired to-night. One would think you had just struck Saratoga. Suppose Brave Heart hadn't rounded to, and was still the lob he was at Morris Park, what would they make favorite Thursday?"

"I don't know, I'm sure."

"You don't know! Well, what in the name of

Brave Heart

Merry Hades is the meanin' of this note then?" and Lewis drew from his pocket a letter and handed it to Begg. "What 'd you ask me in that letter to lay you five thousand to a thousand against Gallantry for—it's signed 'A. Hedley,' an' I suppose that's your name, isn't it?"

"People persist in calling me Hedley, anyway."

"Just so. You gave Pietro to understand that Brave Heart had struck himself, an' you gave him this letter for me. The Dago don't know what's in the letter; but he knows, and I know, an' you know that if your mount can't win—Gallantry can. Now, I've made out a ticket—here it is—five thousand to one thousand. Gallantry. It'll be more to our interests to have Gallantry win—of course if yours can't."

Lewis held the little pasteboard out to Begg asking, "Will you take it? I've marked it 'paid,' too. See?"

Begg had deposited the letter in his pocket, and he placed the ticket on Gallantry with it.

"That's right," the other exclaimed with a breath of relief. "Let Mr. Adage and Co. go spy-in' around on people as pays for the feed of their horses—they ought to be thrown down, an' I'll give you Ab Lewis's word for it, you'll cop double what's on that ticket. I'll take care of the Dago. It's all right, ain't it—we understand each other

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now. To make sure you'd better give me the office before the first race that everything's O. K. Come into the ring and give me the glad eye."

"All right."

"Mind," Lewis said, and his voice grew hard, "no double cross—a man that throws Ab Lewis down goes to the wall, if it takes seven summers to do it. I'll go into the Club alone—it'll be just as well."

When Lewis had gone Begg went back to the hotel. In his room he lighted a cigar and paced the floor.

"Was there ever such an extraordinary mix-up of two men," he muttered. "I'm Ali Baba amongst the forty thieves. Ugh!"—and he made a grimace of disgust—"it's the racing game—the same all over the world. Five thousand to a thousand," he muttered, taking the ticket and Hedley's missive from his pocket. "We must keep this high-class rogue from fingering that if possible. Evidently my double is a *Chevalier d'Industrie*. My God! and Rosalind to marry a beast like that!"

Begg's mind slipped back over the years he had spent up in Canada flitting between Toronto and British Columbia looking after the interests of the silver mining company he managed. It was just a year ago that Rosalind Lester had come to the mines with General Longley's party. Then Begg

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had travelled east to Toronto with the old general who was interested in the mines.

Begg had been fairly hard hit; now on the threshold of his own home-land the big brown eyes had greeted him with a well-bred look of assignment to his proper place. But also fate, with marked inconsistency, had elected him the protector of the girl's interests—the glove of Lady Disdain had fallen at his feet, and he must at least restore it.

Begg paced the floor for an hour seeking for a solution of the problem of his difficult *métier*. No doubt this Hedley was a first-class villain; and probably because of her engagement to this man Rosalind had tendered him that very distant recognition. At last Begg decided that he must interfere; his very regard for the girl made this imperative, ungracious though his part might seem.

In the morning Adam learned that Miss Lester was living with her brother, Judge Lester. At eleven o'clock he found himself waiting for her in the Judge's reception-room, a prey to misgiving. Very probably Rosalind would take advantage of the unseemly hour of his call, and refuse to see him.

He rose awkwardly as the door opened, but the girl came forward in a simple, pleased way, quite at variance with her manner of the previous evening.

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"I'm so delighted, Mr. Begg," she said, giving him her hand, "it *was* you after all."

Adam was not quite positive about this, the dual life was most confusing.

"You dined last night at Cranford's," she proceeded.

"Yes, the hotel was noisy."

"I thought at first it was you, and then, thinking you were still in Canada, felt that I was mistaken. In fact, I thought it was Mr. Hedley; you are strangely like him."

"It seems so."

"Have you met him?"

"No, but—I understand there is a resemblance."

"You must have thought me very forgetful of old friends. I'm so sorry that I was—was, well, so very distant. It was so good of you to call after—to come."

"I will be candid—it was an accident."

"An accident——?"

"I don't mean that quite, but I felt that perhaps you didn't care to renew our acquaintanceship—I should have gone away but something affecting your interests very deeply—" Begg hesitated for a second, deliberating how he should speak of the disagreeable matter. Rosalind flushed; her interests?

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"It is owing to my strange resemblance to Mr. Hedley——"

"Extraordinary likeness; still, you're really not like him."

"I hope not—I mean, it's very awkward being so very like another man."

"But you are—wait, I'll show you—you haven't seen him, you say."

The girl slipped from the room, and presently returned with a photo in her hand. "There, is that not like you—all but the eyes? And that's my hunter, Brave Heart."

The photo was of a man on horseback.

"Is the gentleman a great friend of yours? I have a reason in asking—it is something affecting his interests."

"No, he is not. Anything you have to say of Mr. Hedley will make little difference to me."

"Then I'll tell you all about it." And he did.

The girl was fiercely indignant. She had set her heart on winning the "Foxbrook" with Brave Heart. "He has carried me in the hunting field," she said, "and he's just the bravest, gentlest creature that ever lived. Now, because of a vile specimen of the nobler animal, man, Brave Heart must stand in his stable."

"Put up another rider," suggested Begg.

"I can't get one—it's too late. It's for gentle-

Brave Heart

men riders belonging to our Hunt Association, and the few good horsemen have other mounts. You see, this cup is the one thing that every person who hunts covets. That rascal!" She stamped her little foot. "In fancy I already saw that silver bowl in my drawing-room."

"Give Mr. Hedley a good talking to and let him ride then."

"Never!" The determined ring of her voice made Begg jump. "It's better for him not to ride, too. No matter what he might promise, if he lost the race I should be suspicious, don't you see. No, it won't do. I should rather put up with my disappointment and scratch poor old Brave Heart. My brother doesn't approve of my racing, and if there were any talk over Mr. Hedley's losing the race—" Rosalind completed the sentence with a shrug of the shoulders.

"What are the conditions of this race, Miss Lester?"

"Two miles and a half—full course, for qualified hunters, ridden by members of the Hunt Association. Oh, yes, Mr. Hedley could claim an allowance of five pounds for not having won a steeplechase during the year. He's a splendid horseman, but he had bad luck—perhaps he rode the other races as he was going to ride this, though. There is a purse of money to the winner, but it's

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that lovely big silver cup that I want, so that when my friends call I can show them what Brave Heart did. That man! and I left the horse's preparation entirely to him!"

Begg had discovered the plot, but he seemed utterly helpless in the matter of a remedy for the evil. He sat for a little puzzling over the unfortunate incident. Presently he said, "I should like to see your horse, Miss Lester; where is he?"

"Just behind, in the stable. I'll go with you."

"Kelly has gone to dinner, I fancy," Rosalind said, as Begg opened the stable door.

The girl stepped quietly in behind a big, rakish bay, and, as she stroked the horse's neck, he turned his black muzzle and snuggled her cheek with his velvet lip.

"Well, Brave Heart, sweetheart," she said, "you'll have to stand in the stable to-morrow. He hasn't had a gallop for two days," she continued to Begg. "Mr. Hedley said the horse had struck his leg and needed a rest, but I'm sure it's part of the plot. It's just terrible. I wanted so much to win that race."

"He looks good enough to win anything; he's got rare, honest eyes. The Foxbrook is to-morrow, eh? The horse should have had a gallop in him yesterday or to-day. Let me take him for a canter this evening."

Brave Heart

"You, Mr. Begg?"

"Why not? I ride a bit in Canada.

"Yes, I know you are a good horseman. It won't matter, though, for I shan't start him in the race."

"We'll see about that. It would be a sin to scratch that horse simply because the rogues have tried to make money out of him. Will you leave the question of a rider to me, Miss Lester—I think I can arrange it so Brave Heart will win, if he's good enough—will you let me try?"

"Yes, I will. I want to win that race, but a woman can't do anything in a case of this kind. You must not allow Mr. Hedley to ride; and if you lose that five pounds he is entitled to, it might cause Brave Heart to lose the race. I've heard Mr. Hedley say that, at the weight, my horse could just beat a mare called Gallantry."

"Mr. Hedley is away, isn't he?"

"I understand he went to New York, and is coming back to-night."

"Well, don't mention my name in the matter at all. I have a little plan. Just tell the man Kelly to take Brave Heart down to Mr. *Hedley* at the Universal, at six o'clock. I'll go back to the hotel now; and don't worry, just leave it to me—I think it will be all right."

At six o'clock that evening Mr. Begg, in riding

Brave Heart

kit, sat on the hotel veranda waiting. Presently he saw Brave Heart at the curb, and as he approached the horse the man who held the bridle-rein touched his cap.

"How is he, Kelly?"

"Like a kitten, Mr. Hedley. He's cleaned up every oat, an' there don't seem nothin' the matter with his leg, as I can see."

"By the way, Kelly, how long is it since I've given you anything extra—you've been pretty good with the horse."

"Well, sor, your honor hasn't thought of it yet, but I've only been on the job a week."

"Of course—I forgot. Here, just put this in your pocket, and if the old horse wins to-morrow you'll get something worth while. You can go back to the stable, I'll bring him home."

As Adam Begg rode away the Irishman looked at the bill that had been thrust into his hand and muttered: "Faith, ye can't tell how a duck'll swim by seein' him walk on land. I'd sized Mr. Hedley up for a hard un."

Begg made his way to the race-course. The day's racing was finished, and only a few stable boys lounged about the paddock. By judicious questioning, a bit of information gleaned from this one and a little from another, he got the lay of the Steeplechase Course.

Brave Heart

He took Brave Heart through the field, over a couple of jumps, dodging the others. "He'll do," the rider muttered to himself; "he doesn't need schooling from me; all I want is the lay of the land."

He rode back to the stables, and, without going into the house, returned to his hotel. On inquiry he found that Hedley had not yet returned.

Begg sat about the rotunda until one o'clock, but the other did not arrive. He went to bed, and rising early, read in the register: "Arthur Hedley, 640."

A card, a little worldly diplomacy, and at ten Hedley was in Begg's room, wondering what this stranger's business was, and struck by the extraordinary resemblance the other bore to the face he shaved every morning. He found out presently, for his host was fairly explicit.

"I asked you to my room, Mr. Hedley, because I wished to discuss a certain matter confidentially."

Hedley nodded, waiting.

"I am going to be very candid, and if you can stand it until I have quite finished I dare say we shan't quarrel at the end."

The listener nodded again, wondering if his double was an escaped lunatic.

"You are acquainted with one Ab Lewis, a Knight of the Pencil."

Brave Heart

"Well?" Hedley ejaculated, scarcely moving his lips.

"And one Pietro, a 'clocker' of horses; also a Mr. Pierce, a benefactor of the betting public."

"What the devil's this—it's like Genesis?"

Adam did not dispute the statement, but continued, "You were to have ridden Brave Heart in the Foxbrook to-day."

"I am, you mean."

"That remains to be seen. You took five thousand to a thousand Gallantry, for the same race."

"It's a lie!" cried the accused, springing to his feet.

"In a way you're right—you didn't take it as yet, you asked for it."

"Who the devil are you, to pry into my affairs? It's all a damned lie."

"It's all quite true. I have your letter to Lewis in my pocket. There, sit down now," Begg continued as Hedley took a threatening step forward. "I also have Lewis's ticket on Gallantry with your name on it. In fact, I know all about this little job."

Hedley's face grew white; there was actually more than his accuser knew.

"And you brought me to your room to tell me this—what's your game?"

Brave Heart

"I'm a friend of Miss Lester's; and I ought to lay the whole matter before the stewards."

"My God! I'd be ruined. I'll pay—tell me how much you want out of it."

Begg only smiled, and said in the same calm drawl: "There is one other course——"

"I'll ride Brave Heart to win."

"No, I've got a better plan than that—a safer plan. You'll stay here in my room to-day—you can have the use of my name for callers, it's on the card—and I'll ride the horse as Mr. Hedley; I can do the weight, 154."

"I'll see you damned before I'll agree to that."

"It's for you to decide; I can only do it with your compliance. I'll lay the matter before the stewards, or I'll ride in your boots. You won't ride anyway, that's settled. If you persist you'll be warned off."

"Why the devil do you want to ride in my name?"

"I need your certificate. Miss Lester can't get another rider, and the horse would be scratched. Besides, it'll save all talk—it'll save your skin."

"You are taking a chance. Does Miss Lester know?"

"Nobody knows but our two selves. I *am* taking a chance, but I can stand it. If I'm caught I

Brave Heart

take all the blame; I shall be prepared to swear that she knows nothing about it."

"Somebody's sure to discover you're not me and lodge an objection."

"Not likely. When your friends can't distinguish between us in ordinary clothes, they won't when I've got the colors on and the cap pulled over my eyes. Do you agree?"

"Lewis will lose a fortune if Brave Heart wins, and he'd ruin me."

"You owe him a thousand."

"You know that, too?"

"Yes. Lewis is a rascal and doesn't deserve consideration, but you can write him a note stating that Brave Heart is going to win if he can; I'll deliver your missive."

"What about the thousand on that Gallantry ticket? I'll lose that."

"Lewis has marked it paid; and if you wish to back Brave Heart I'll put your money on for you."

"I won't back a man I've never seen in the saddle—you may be a ship captain for all I know. You'll probably fall at the Liverpool and break your cursed neck—I hope you do. If I agree to this crazy thing will you promise on your honor that nobody knows about it?"

"Yes; and you give me your parole to stay in this room till six o'clock."

Brave Heart

"Well, I can't help it; I've got to give in, I suppose."

"Tell me where I'll find the colors; and I'll have to trouble you for riding breeches and boots, I fear."

Then Begg drove to Judge Lester's.

He told Rosalind that everything had been arranged satisfactorily—absolutely satisfactorily. If she would have Brave Heart sent to the paddock at the proper time, he would attend to everything else, even to the winning of the race if it was in Brave Heart's loins to do it. When she asked who was to ride the horse he reminded her of her promise to leave everything to him; she would know the rider when she saw him in the saddle.

"Well, I want Brave Heart to win, that's all I ask for. I'll sit on the Club lawn and wait. You do just as you like."

Begg went back to the hotel, got the colors and riding gear from Hedley, and the note for Lewis, and after lunch drove to the course. Before the first race he went down to the betting ring, and handing the note to the bookmaker said, "That goes."

Lewis tore the note open, and a frown hung like a heavy cloud above his sharp, hooked nose. He got off the stool, saying "See here," and moved around behind the cashier.

Brave Heart

"What the devil's this?"

"Don't you read English?"

"This isn't English—this is a nigger trick. What's wrong?"

Begg thought for a minute; he might as well save Hedley trouble, as that young man had been amenable to reason. "There's a leak. I'll tell you about it some day." Begg felt sure that Hedley would revile Lewis for having made the mistake in identity.

"Give me back that Gallantry ticket, then. You can't stand to win on them both to nothing."

Begg became possessed of a brilliant idea. "That's right. You lay me two to one to five hundred Brave Heart, and mark it paid—I'll give up this ticket. It's worth that to you to know just where you're at."

"Say, Mr. Hedley, you ought to quit the mug layers and make a book—you'd make your fortune. I'll do it, though—here it is."

"And here's your Gallantry ticket, Mr. Lewis."

As Begg walked away, he muttered, "I've robbed the king looter to help the peasant thief, that's not so bad. Hedley has got a soft bet in spite of himself." And he continued out through the gate, across the drive, and over to the paddock, where a small building containing the weighing

Brave Heart

and dressing rooms nestled among tall, slim-growing pines.

As Begg disappeared from the betting ring Lewis turned to a small, swarthy man and said: "You've got it down pretty fine, Pietro; it was a straight throw-down for me. That's five thousand to the good," the bookmaker continued, tearing up the Gallantry ticket; "and, Mr. Smooth-Aleck—what d'you say his name was, Pietro?"

"Begg."

"Well, Mr. Begg is welcome to that thousand on Brave Heart, when he gets it. How'd you catch on, Pietro?"

"Dis mornin' I flights meself to de hotel t'see de gen'l'man jock—de straight Mr. Hedley. I gits de layout of his room, an' waltzes up. I see two of 'em chinnin' at de door. Gee! but dey was like two twins. Dey goes in, an' of course 'tain't fer me to interrupt two gents as is talkin' pretty loud an' I sashays up an' down close to de door. De transom's open, an' as dey's puttin' up a job ag'in straight people, I knobbles de whole chin music, an' gallops meself to you wid de winnin's."

"You made a ten-strike, Pietro. We're on the fluffiest kind of velvet. That five thou' Gallantry was botherin' me a bit—now I've got it. You play oyster, an' I'll make an old-time hog-killin' over Gallantry; we'll just whip-saw this thing both ways.

Brave Heart

I'll take all this wise Adage & Bliss money on Brave Heart, an' I'll go down the line on the mare Gallantry. If she wins on her merits we don't say nothin', see? If Brave Heart wins I'll put a man up to object that Hedley didn't ride. I'll teach 'em to monkey with Ab Lewis. They'll play twins ag'in me no more, I don't think. I thought there was somethin' queer about that duck when he was talkin' at the Club, but I thought he'd been havin' a bit too much wine. But don't tell your own mother, Pietro; this is too good a thing. Just go and sit in the stand and fall asleep; when you wake up you'll be richer by—well, I'll do what's right; I don't have to tell *you* what Ab Lewis does to men that stay by him."

Meaning to obey these orders to the letter, Pietro went to the stand. There a brilliant idea struck him. He jumped up and went around to the other side of the betting ring to a bookmaker who was making a combination book.

"What'll you lay me Hermes for de firs' an' Gallantry for de Foxbrook, Fred?"

"Fifteen to one the combination."

Pietro handed out a hundred-dollar note, saying, "I'll take it to dat;" and as he returned to the stand he muttered: "Dem's juicy odds. Hermes is a pipe; an' when Ab gits to work de mare'll be cut to twos."

Brave Heart

Unobserved of Pietro his master, Pierce, had seen the betting transaction. "What's Pietro backing with you, Fred?" he asked, when the other had gone.

"Who's gettin' the double cross, Pierce?"

"As to how?"

"Well, you're gettin' it, or you're givin' it to your people."

"You've got the floor, Freddy."

"Well, you've sent out Brave Heart for the steeplechase, an' your clocker's just parted with a hundred on a Gallantry-Hermes combination."

"Thanks, Freddy," Pierce said dryly, and made his way to that part of the stand his man always frequented.

"What are you wise to in the steeplechase, Pietro?" he asked when he had located the Italian.

"Brave Heart oughter do de trick."

"You've been with me a year, Pietro. When I picked you up in New Orleans you were on your uppers, and a sandwich was a great big banquet; now you could draw a good-sized check. That's just an observation, Pietro. Now give me the straight goods about the steeplechase, and how you're goin' to land that fifteen-hundred Gallantry double."

The Italian stared at the speaker; but the big

Brave Heart

black eyes wore a calm, quiet look behind the sheltering glasses, and a complacent smile hovered about the full red lips.

Pietro remained silent for a minute, then he said: "You can play Gallantry, boss; dere's some-thin' doin'. I jes' ketched on, but it's straight goods."

"Brave Heart will beat the mare for a certainty," Pierce said.

"Dat won't make no dif'rence—he won't git de coin. It's de jock—dere'll be an objection. You do's I tell you, boss."

"Thanks, Pietro!" and Pierce slipped away in the crowd. He passed through the lunch-room, along the back veranda, and over to the paddock. Begg had been familiarizing himself with the routine of weighing and other matters; now he was helping Kelly saddle Brave Heart, off to one side under a tree.

Pierce saw him and, approaching, beckoned him with a little nod of the head. "I think I ought to tell you, Mr. Hedley—I've got it from a very reliable source, there's something wrong; I got a hint of an objection if you win. Have you made no mistake in the conditions of the Foxbrook—is the horse qualified all right—and are you entitled to any allowance you've claimed? You see, I've sent out Brave Heart, my people'll back him, and

Brave Heart

if they lose on an objection they'll hold it out against me."

Begg turned his face toward the horse to hide its sudden pallor; he felt it grow cold. Evidently Hedley had doubled on him.

"Thank you, Mr. Pierce; it's very good of you," he said in a firm voice. "I'll look into the matter to make sure."

"Will you let me know?"

"If you can come back here in half an hour I will."

Begg hurried to the Club Enclosure. As Mr. Hedley he was allowed to pass in. In humiliation he explained his plan and its failure to Rosalind. Beyond doubt it was known by some one at the course, and the horse would be disqualified.

"It was too risky," Rosalind said. "It was good of you to attempt it, and I'm not angry. We'll just have to scratch Brave Heart after all."

"You can't do that, it's too late—the stewards wouldn't allow it."

"And I won't have Mr. Hedley ride. What can I do? It's dreadful, this dilemma. There isn't a gentleman rider left." She held her race programme open at the Foxbrook, and continued: "Gallantry—Mr. Heyl rides her; Trombone, Mr. Black; Crusader, his owner; and——"

"Let me see your programme, please," Begg in-

Brave Heart

interrupted. "We are all wrong; these conditions read for gentlemen riders recognized by the N. S. & H. Association, or the C. H. A. That's the Canadian Hunt Association, and I'm a member of that—I have a certificate—I can ride Brave Heart in my own name. It was stupid of me not to look up the condition of the race. If I'd known that I shouldn't have taken the other chance."

"I thought it was for our association only. I even gave no thought to the C. H. A. initials. It's all my fault in telling you wrong."

"Wait," Begg exclaimed. "Five-year-olds 159; how does Brave Heart get in at 154? Oh, I see! 'Riders who have not won a steeplechase in 1900 allowed five pounds'—that's where Hedley got his five pounds off. That's unfortunate—I won up in Canada, and can't claim the allowance; I'll have to put up 159. Shall I try it?"

"Yes, a thousand times, yes. Brave Heart is strong, the weight won't stop him."

Begg pulled out his watch. "We're just in time. You can declare the overweight at the time of the first race, and it doesn't start for another five minutes. I'll attend to that, and the change in riders; then drive back to the hotel for my Canadian certificate, and we'll get a run for the cup anyway."

"I feel sure you'll win, Mr. Begg."

Brave Heart

"I'll just say that Hedley is not here. If there's any trouble about the change in riders you can easily put it right by speaking to the stewards."

When Adam Begg's name went up on the board opposite number two, which was Brave Heart's number on the programme, Ab Lewis stared in angry astonishment. They had doubled on him again, and already he had commenced his plunge on Gallantry. But he stuck to the mare, thinking the extra five pounds, with probably a poorer jockey in the saddle, would allow her to win.

When Begg put the black body and red cap colors on, somehow his mind flitted back to the stout lady's dream of thirteen on the black, and red winning the final cast. He remembered the dream as an omen of good luck—he would win.

A curious little throng stood looking at this rider whose name was so utterly unknown to them.

"I think Miss Lester's horse ought to win this, with Hedley up," one man said.

"Hedley doesn't ride," his friend objected. "'A. Begg' is on the jockey board. Who the devil is 'A. Begg?' I was going to back it, but not now, thank you; he's a hundred and fifty-nine—five pounds over, too."

"My dear boy, that's Hedley, and Miss Lester's colors, black—red cap. I've seen Art Hedley ride too often to make any mistake. The clerk

Brave Heart

of the scales, or somebody, has blundered, that's all. Just wait a minute."

He stepped over to Begg, nodded pleasantly, and asked: "How is Brave Heart doing—pretty well? He ought to win this."

"He's well. I hope he'll win."

The gentleman returned to his friend and said triumphantly: "That's Hedley right enough. He thinks he'll win—I'm going to back him."

But poor old Kelly was completely mystified. Many searching looks he gave Begg; finally he said: "I was mistook, sor. I thought it quare yisterday at th' hotel when you was kind enough to remember me wit' a present. I hope it'll be all roight, sor, an' that you'll win. There's the call to mount," he continued, stripping the sheet from the bay's loins. "You needn't be feered of Gallantry, sor. I've seen this horse run afore, and the farder he goes the better he loikes it. The mare'll quit, that's what she'll do. She's got a gut on her loike a greyhound, an' mares don't stay when they're that way."

As Kelly led Brave Heart to the course gate, he kept throwing a word up over his shoulder to the man in the saddle who had slipped him a ten-dollar note for nothing.

"It's not for me, sor, to be givin' you roidin' orders, but I used to roide meself in Oireland—

Brave Heart

that's where they have leppers—shure half the Grand National winners comes from the little island. This fellow's got the Melbourne strain in him; I looked up his pedigree when I saw them lop ears—that's the Melbourne, an' they could stay forever. The mare's fast, but hang to her wit' this old bull-dog an' he'll eat her heart out afore they get twice around that stiff field."

Begg listened intently, leaning forward pretending to adjust the martingale.

They were at the course. The gate swung wide. Kelly took his hand from the bridle-rein, saying: "Good luck, sor! Hold him together an' you'll come home alone. Mind the big wall, he's a bit keen."

Gallantry was number one on the programme. Adam Begg had a chance to observe the mare as they paraded down past the stand. All her lines indicated speed and nervous, cat-like movement. She would probably lose nothing at her jumps—skim them like a bird; she would cut the corners—probably she was as handy on the bit as a trick pony.

The more Begg looked at Gallantry, the more he valued Kelly's parting injunctions. If he could only stick to her until her rider became a little uneasy and loosened up, she would go to pieces. Begg knew as well as though he had heard the

Brave Heart

jockey's riding orders that Gallantry would cut out a fast pace, keep out in front to try and run the others off their legs. She carried 148 pounds; she was a four-year-old, so she must have won to have up the extra eight pounds. But the year would tell.

"We must drive her, my boy," he whispered to Brave Heart, patting his neck. He stole a look from under his cap peak across the hedge of pink and white hydrangeas to the club lawn; he saw a programme flutter encouragingly against a background of gray silk. "All right, girl," he whispered; "if I were in the habit of asking favors of the gods, I'd claim their condescension for the next five minutes."

Then the seven horses turned, and passed through the gate to the grassed course. As they trotted by the water jump, Begg wheeled Brave Heart, walked him up to it, and as the big bay cocked his ears inquiringly at the little pool, the rider said: "Not too big a jump here, my boy; steady does it. We'll just keep to the outside at this damp spot; they always fall to the inside crowding each other."

They wheeled once at the start, the flag fluttered for a second, then cut downward like a scimitar, and the bull-toned voice of the starter roared, "Go!"

Brave Heart

Little circles of green were cut from the turf as the iron-bound hoofs levered the gallant thoroughbreds into motion; the gay-colored silk jackets wove tremulously in and out; there was a flash of scarlet in front leading them like a beacon—like the red star of war, and the sod, beaten by the impatient feet of the eager racers, rolled out a charge like the murmur of many drums. It was Gallantry in front, her slim neck stretched in joyous delight, her fierce gallop with its swift easy stride, carrying her along at a terrific clip. At her heels drove Trombone, his rider's blue jacket almost hiding the scarlet from Begg, half a length back on Brave Heart.

Begg felt the big horse stretching his muscles to the work with an easy consciousness of power; there was no jarring of the toes; no scrambling shifting of the feet; no fighting with the bit; just a sweep of going forward, as a finished sculler pulls a boat. Begg's heart sang with joy. The ears that had lopped so carelessly as they cantered to the post were now stiffened forward, telling of the bull-dog heart that longed for the winning post. He needs little from me, the rider thought as he rested his hands on the great withers.

The scarlet jacket shot into the air, then dipped; there was a switch of the chestnut mare's blond tail and a little puff of dust like rifle smoke. Then

Brave Heart

Brave Heart, rising to the bank, swept over with scarcely a shiver of his big frame.

Down the back Gallantry drew away a length, but the blue jacket behind was sawing a little up and down, and Begg knew that Trombone's driver was driving his horse.

"Little Boy Blue will worry the mare," Begg confided to Brave Heart; "we'll just sit tight and chip in when he's done for."

Rounding the bottom, a black raced up to Brave Heart, and as they swung at the Liverpool, struck his knees and went crashing forward as though he had been tipped from a spring-board.

Brave Heart, checked, jinked sideways, and cleared wall, horse, and rider, and then on again.

"Good boy!" Begg panted, slipping his foot back into the stirrup.

At the water jump, Trombone, driven by his rider, took off too soon, struck with his hind hoofs, landed short, and rolled over.

Begg heard the music of a cheer as Brave Heart cleared it with a swing.

Down the back for the last time, and the mare still two lengths to the good. Begg clicked to the bay, and slipped his hands a little forward. He felt the muscles under him shiver, the horse seemed to flatten a little, the wind crackled his silk fiercer;

Brave Heart

but still, always in front was the taunting yellow tail that mocked him.

Would the four-year-old never come back; were her slim loins all a lie—were they steel, impervious to the long tiring course, indifferent to the strain of mud wall and water jump; was she still running well within herself—something to spare?

He drove at the bay; the Melbournes were sluggish—all stayers were sluggish. "Go on, my boy!" he called at the lower turn of the loop; "on, Brave Heart!"

Ah! The mare had struck heavily; she pecked; the scarlet, that was like a blotch of blood against the green of the trees beyond, drooped; now the mare galloped again, but there was only a length between them. Brave Heart had lobbed over the bank as though by chance.

But the length! Gallantry's falter at the wall spoke of weariness. But now there were no more jumps; they were at the long, wide homestretch. Would her lightness of foot make good on the hard going; would the eleven pounds pull in the weight just get her home?

How Begg regretted the five pounds he had been forced to take on; that would have more than made up for the length!

He raised his whip, but the god of intelligence that sometimes rides with the man of thought

Brave Heart

whispered, "The horse knows—don't strike him." His hand fell to his side; he crouched over the wet withers and waited.

In the stand the mob yelled: "The mare wins! She's got him beat! Come on you, Gallantry!"

Lewis, perched on a high stool out in the open in front of the betting ring, was whispering to himself, "Thirty thousand if it's a cent. They'll monkey with Ab Lewis, will they?"

On the club lawn a little woman in gray silk leaned over the back of a chair and her big brown eyes stretching down the course saw the red gleam of Gallantry's colors, and behind—it seemed many lengths—was the black jacket of poor old Brave Heart.

Then the dust thrown from Gallantry's hoofs cut at Begg's face; he was gaining—he hadn't noticed it. The bay was not running faster—just that monotonous ever-plugging gallop. "God! she's tiring!" Begg muttered. He could see the little dip sideways as the mare reached with her fore quarters. He swayed the weight of his body to the right. Brave Heart's nose was lapped on the chestnut's rump. They seemed to hang there for an age. Then the bay's nose sawed the air at the red jacket; slowly the mare was coming back to him. Then it was a neck; they were opposite the betting ring. Begg could see the mare's eyes—

Brave Heart

they were bloodshot in distress. Now they raced head and head. A red arm rose in the air, there was the swishing cut of a whip, the gallant chestnut who had given her last ounce of running shrank from the blow, and the mouse-colored muzzle of Brave Heart shot first across the judge's eye.

The strain of waiting had told on Begg's nerves; he was soft; he had not been in hard training.

Almost by instinct he pulled at the bay's head, "Steady, boy!"

They had finished—had he won? He reeled in the saddle drunkenly; he had been riding a race; that was the sum total of his conscious knowledge.

His mount broke to a walk, turned, and carried him back to the finish post. If Begg guided the horse he didn't know it; he was dizzy; the sea of faces up in the stand were like pink blotches on a poster. As he sat in the saddle waiting instinctively for the judge's signal to dismount, he could hear the rat-tat-tat of many hands beating a salvo of victory. Was it for Brave Heart?

The riders were dismounting. He slipped to the ground, groped for girth buckles, the saddle swung against his chest.

Ah! what was that? He listened.

An Irish voice was saying: "You rode the foinest race, sor, I ever see. If you'd a-moved you'd a-been beat."

Brave Heart

"Beat!" Begg repeated, "did I win?"

"Did you win?—your number's up; quick, sor, they're waitin' for you—go and weigh in."

The string of many-colored humanity filed over the weighing scales.

"All right, all right, all right!" the clerk's tongue clicked automatically. The numbers "2, 1, 6," with the "all right" sign beneath, were run up; and Ab Lewis, with a muttered imprecation, ran his eye over his betting book seeking the full extent of his humiliation.

As Begg passed around to the end of the club lawn on his way to the dressing-room, the girl called to him over the fence, "Come here, please, Mr. Begg."

"I thought I'd lost," he said quite simply.

"Brave Heart and courage won," the girl answered, looking into his tired eyes.

They seemed to say the man was tired, for she continued, unconscious that he hadn't spoken it: "I'm tired, too—I've gone to pieces. Don't come back; just rest a little. You're to dine with me to-night at Cranford's—there, because of the other night; I want to atone."

**THE RECHRISTENING OF
DIABLO**



The Rechristening of Diablo

THE Maharaja of Darwaza was tired of crocks. He said so himself, and when the Raja spoke it was law; also, if anyone contradicted him it was—the deuce. By “crocks” he didn’t mean pickle-jars, he meant broken-down race-horses.

He had been a fair mark for every racing officer in the land. When a high-priced nag threw a splint, split a hoof, or went wrong in his wind, he was sold to Darwaza as a special favor at a fair, generous price. The result was that he had a rare collection of antiquities in horse-flesh.

Yearly he gave a cup at the big meet in Calcutta; and yearly he failed to win any sort of a cup himself.

He was a Maharaja with a string on. The British really ran his Raj through the resident Political Agent. So, relieved of most of the executive drudgery of a boss monarch, he had nothing to do but play at being king. Racing is the sport of kings, so naturally the Raja played the game after an expensive fashion. He had con-

The Rechristening of Diablo

siderable fun at it, but, as I have said, little loot, for he won nothing.

Of course he had a high-priced trainer, a man resembling a cocktail in his genealogical make-up. Irish, Scotch, and English had contributed their quota, and the result was Drake — "Dumpy" Drake, as he was called. The only distinctive national trait that had survived the evolution of Drake was an elliptical English form of speech.

Each year, when the Maharaja said they must win the Cooch Behar Cup, or the Durbungha, the Ballygunge, or some other cup, "Dumpy" would look through the equine bric-à-brac and report on the possibilities. Why the report should come as a surprise to the Raja was not understandable, for it was monotonous in its annual sameness. The Kicker couldn't be trained—his feet wouldn't stand it; Ring was only fit for the stud; Diablo's temper was worse than ever—the stable-boy had to feed him through a hole in the wall now; Silver King had liver; and so on, through the whole list, running into the hundreds, there was a black mark against every name.

The Raja had been educated at Eton. He had also attained to other bits of learning in divers quarters, so he could give expression to his astonishment and indignation in very aristocratic Hindoo-English.

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"Dumpy," who was more or less of a linguist on occasion himself, used to retire from this annual cyclonic interview with a perilous regard for the higher forms of education.

That was pretty much the state of things the year Darwaza set his heart on winning the "Pattialla Cup." Raja Pattialla, who had only been racing a short time, had won two of *his* cups; so why in the name of all the Hindoo Pantheon should he not annex one of Pattialla's mugs to grace his Darwaza palace?

He asked "Dumpy" about it. Drake ran his fingers meditatively through his hair as he stood before the Raja, cap in hand, as if he might, by some peculiar physical method, quicken the thought-germ into life, and bring forth a goodly idea.

"It's no good buyin' a 'orse from hany of the hofficers, yer 'ighness," he said.

"No," replied Darwaza, his impenetrable Indian face showing nothing of the strong things that were working in him over "Dumpy's" remark: "We must always buy horses from them, but not to win races, eh?"

"Dumpy" passed over this observation judiciously, for sometimes when these same horses were sold, a commission dropped from the clouds, and was found on his dining-table in the shape of a big bag of rupees.

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"Yer 'ighness might send to Haustralia for a cup 'orse."

"We tried that twice," answered the Raja. "One year the man we sent blew in the 'oof' on the Melbourne Cup, and we never saw man, horse, or money again. The other time we got two horses, and between the two they couldn't furnish four sound legs."

The Raja saw that "Dumpy" was thinking. This was usually a laborious operation, eating up much time, but Darwaza had the patience pertaining to the Orient, so he waited.

At last spoke the trainer: "If Diablo would gallop, yer 'ighness, there's nothin' in the land would stand afore 'im."

"Which nag is that, trainer? Can't remember to have seen him. Didn't know we had a fast horse in the stables."

"Don't think yer 'ighness never saw 'im. We bought 'im from Major Gooch. 'E's never run much."

"Well, I don't want to see him if he's like that. I hate the sight of the whole imperial lot. But can't you do anything with him?"

"No, yer 'ighness. There never was but one man could ride 'im; Captain Frank Jocelyn. He rode 'im for Major Gooch."

"Then he'll never gallop for me if he waits for

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Captain Frank," said the Raja, with fine English decisiveness.

"Dumpy" knew that; he knew that Jocelyn caustic-tipped tongue had laid into Raja Darwaza at the Rawal Pindi durbar over some fancied racing grievance.

"Diablo's turned reg'lar cannibal too, yer 'ighness; 'e'd rather heat a man nor gallop hunder 'im."

"What has he been doing now, Trainer Drake?"

"Heaten the harm hoff the ridin' boy, yer 'ighness. Pulled 'im hout o' the saddle this mornin', hand shook 'im like Nipper would a rat."

"That's bad," remarked the Raja. "I don't want the people eaten up by my horses; it's bad enough for them to get mauled when we're out after tiger."

"What'll I do with 'im, yer 'ighness?" asked "Dumpy."

"What do we do with an elephant when he gets bad, Drake?"

"Tie 'im by the 'ind leg to a tree, yer 'ighness, hand leave 'im to think hit hover. But that won't do Diablo no good. We've tried starvin' 'im, hand heverythink helse."

"What happens the *hathi* when he's *real* bad?"

"'E gits shot, yer 'ighness."

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"Well, you now know what to do with this son of Lucifer; you can arrange the details."

When "Dumpy" left His Highness he had every intention of carrying out the king's order about Diablo, but he got thinking about Captain Jocelyn, and the longer his mind plodded along on that road, the clearer he saw his way to doing a stroke of business. Also he would be a humanitarian. It would be a sin to shoot a fine, upstanding English horse, whose grandsire had won a Derby. Why not sell him to Captain Frank?—that was the goal his mind arrived at. It stood like a huge, white-washed fence at the end of this lane of thought; he could see nothing else. There was no need of bothering the Raja any more about it.

Now Captain Frank was down at Lucknow, two hundred miles away; but that didn't matter—in fact it was all the better; if he could make the sale Diablo would be that much farther off.

That night Drake took the train for Lucknow, to bury a cousin of his wife's. "Dumpy" had not had native servants for years without learning something of Eastern diplomacy.

Of course they made a deal. One doesn't want a fancy price for a horse that's got to be shot. And Captain Frank's mouth had long watered for Diablo; for he knew just how

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good a horse he was, and could get that good out of him.

"I want you to change 'is name," the trainer said to Captain Frank.

"What for?" queried the captain.

"Family reasons," answered Drake. "My grandmother hobjects to 'is name."

"'Dumpy,' you're fat, and your brain lies deep," remarked Jocelyn, pleasantly; "and to relieve the sensitiveness of your maternal ancestor, I'll call him The Dove. Do you think that will please the old lady?"

"Hi'm sure she'll be satisfied," said the trainer, shoving Captain Frank's check in his pocket.

"I'll change it in the right way, though," continued the captain. "It'll cost me twenty-five rupees to give the Calcutta stewards notice of the change. I'll have to run him at some small meeting as The Dove, late Diablo, and after that your ancestress will sleep easier."

Drake went back to Darwaza with a thousand rupees in his pocket, and the feeling that he had saved the life of a good horse—good as far as speed went, but devilish bad as regards temper.

On his return he found the Raja bubbling over with a scheme to get a good horse. The plan was simple—simple for a king, who had the means to carry it out.

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He would give the "Darwaza Ruby" as a prize for a race to be run at the Calcutta meeting. The race would be a very swell affair; and also it would test the staying powers of the horses entered. A mile and three-quarters on the flat was the thing, the Raja declared; no sprint for him. There would be no entrance fees, absolutely nothing. The winner would take the ruby, worth at least twenty thousand rupees; and all Darwaza claimed was the right to buy the first, or any other horse in the race at an outside limit of twenty thousand rupees.

"It'll bring out a big field," he said to the trainer; "and the horses dicky on their pins, will never stay the distance, for the ground will be as hard as a bone then. It'll be a straight-run race—they'll go for the ruby. And even if I think the best horse hasn't won, I can claim him, you see."

It was a unique way of getting a good horse; quite Napoleonic in its subtle strategy; and it looked all right.

Certainly the horses in Darwaza's stable at that time had cost him the price of twenty rubies, and he hadn't a beast fit to start at a "sky meeting."

That was in October. The Raja would have his race, the "Darwaza Ruby Trials," run at the Calcutta first meeting in December. All the good

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horses would be there, and the ruby would bring out a good field.

The "Pattialla Cup" would be run for at the second Calcutta meeting, January 20th, so if he got a good horse by means of this plan he could certainly win the coveted cup.

The Raja's secretary corresponded with the Calcutta stewards, and the announcement of the new race was published broadcast—on the notice boards, in *The Asian*, the racing calendar—in fact, everywhere. It opened up a pleasing vista to the eyes of racing men on the *qui vive* for that charmingly illusive thing known as a "soft snap."

The scale of weight was very simple. A handicap would give a poor horse the same chance of winning as a good one; so Darwaza would none of that. Catchweights over 8 stone 7 pounds was what he said; and let the best horse win.

When Captain Frank heard of it he whistled softly to himself and went and winked at Diablo. The horse laid his ears back on his neck, and put both hind feet through the side of his stall, in an ineffectual effort to brush the captain to one side.

"You're feeling good enough to run a mile and three-quarters, my buck," said Jocelyn, looking admiringly at the great glossy quarters of the horse. Then he went in beside Diablo, and twisted

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his ear good and hard. "That's for kicking, my beauty," he said; "now behave."

The horse curled his lip, and turned his head away in disdain, but he didn't kick any more. That was why Frank could ride him—the horse knew Jocelyn wasn't afraid of him; and when a horse knows that you can do anything with him.

Other owners went and looked at their horses too, when they heard of Darwaza's good thing. They looked, and their souls watered in sweetened anticipation of the big ruby, and the twenty thousand that might be won in the matter of about three minutes ten seconds of hard galloping.

Darwaza was after a good horse, while the owners were after that ruby and purse.

Lord Dick really had a great chance. In his string was an English horse, Badger, strong of limb and good of wind. He would carry this tidy weight, 8 stone 7 pounds, and gallop from start to finish of the mile and three-quarters.

Lord Dick said to himself, "I'll *puckerow* [catch] that ruby, and get twenty thousand for Badger."

Captain Frank looked at Diablo meditatively. "I must hurry up and get your name changed, old man; not that it makes any *great* difference, for it's a free for all."

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So Diablo went through his little rechristening race, and henceforth was known as The Dove.

From October to December 20th were months of peace. Darwaza solicited aid from both sides of the godhead, Christian and Hindoo, to help do up Pattialla. "Dumpy" put on ten pounds of fat through the soul-cheering thought of the immediate prospect of getting the best horse in India in his hands.

Captain Frank went the length of securing a passage home in a P. & O., sailing for England in January. "If I pull off that forty thousand," he thought, "I'll go home and see what they're doing on the turf there."

Lord Dick wrote to England arranging for a horse to replace Badger at £500.

So you see everybody was going to do well out of the "Darwaza Ruby." It was really a good thing.

One day "Dumpy" Drake's share of the peace carnival was destroyed; he lost seven pounds weight that day. It was Captain Frank's entrance of The Dove for the "Darwaza Ruby" that caused this disaster. "With Jocelyn hup 'e'll win, hand Hi shall be ruined," whispered "Dumpy" to himself. "His 'ighness'll fire me sure," and indeed for days he was very unhappy.

Then something came his way. By the purest

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fluke in the world, he learned that Captain Frank had backed a note for a friend. An avaricious Hindoo money-lender held the note, and Cashmere held the friend. He was there shooting.

"Dumpy" was not exactly a quick thinker, but, as Jocelyn had remarked in banter, he was deep. So he went to the money-lender and toasted him on his tender side—his fear of losing the amount of the note forever and ever.

"This sahib who's gone to Cashmere," said "Dumpy," "'asn't ha bloomin' rupee to 'is name. 'E howes a *lakh* of debt; besides 'e's hin Cashmere where the law can't touch 'im. Captain Jocelyn's hin Calcutta, hand 'e's booked ha passage for 'ome," and Drake showed the money-lender Jocelyn's name in the newspaper's list of engaged passages.

"*Huzoor*," cried the Hindoo, "these sahibs of evil descent, who scatter rupees as a *bheesti* throws water, will ruin me."

"Hof course they will," affirmed "Dumpy."

"Tell me," begged the money-lender, "you who are my friend, tell me what I shall do."

"*Puckerow* [catch] Jocelyn sahib afore 'e gets hoff 'ome," said Drake, decisively; "hand keep 'im hin jail till 'e pays hup. You can do that heasy; hall you've got to do his swear 'e's leavin' the country."

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"That'll stop 'im," thought the trainer to himself, as he left the Hindoo. "If they coop Captain Frank hup, nobody helse can ride The Dove. Hi 'ate to do hit, for hit's clear dirty, but Hi can't 'ave 'im ruinin' me. There's nobody down Calcutta way knows 'im well enough to pay five thousand to keep 'im hout the *Thanna*."

This was why Captain Frank got a pleasant surprise the day before the race for the "Darwaza Ruby." He had been riding The Dove in all his work, and felt sure that the same gem was all but in his pocket.

As I have said, the day before the race the unexpected happened. Frank was having his bath at his hotel, when his bearer came and said, "Sahib wanting to see master."

"Give him my salaams and a drink," answered the captain, "and tell him to sit down for a minute."

When Frank came back to his room he was greeted by a gentleman who was most effusively polite.

"He was awfully sorry—painful duty, sir—no doubt the captain would arrange it satisfactorily——"

"What the devil are you driving at?" asked Captain Frank, blandly.

Well—well, the truth, the unpleasant truth,

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was that he had a warrant for the gallant captain's arrest on account of that note he had backed in Lucknow.

The captain's argument was somewhat erratic. The Hindoo was a blood-sucking Jew—his friend was an officer, and a gentleman, naturally, and would pay the note as soon as he returned from his hunting expedition in Cashmere. It was an outrage, and the Hindoo money-lender was the unregenerate offspring of low-caste animals.

The bailiff admitted that this was probably all quite true; in fact, speaking from his own varied experience, he was almost certain it was. But, at the same time, the little formality of his friend's not having paid the note before he left, had placed Captain Frank in this awful predicament. The law did not look much at the antecedents of the contracting parties in a case of this kind.

"Oh, damn the law!" said Captain Frank, irritably; "it's a blundering, bull-headed thing, anyway."

"I quite agree with you," rejoined the patient, polite bailiff; "but you can arrange this matter easily by paying the amount, or depositing it; and when your friend comes back you can settle the matter between you."

It was very simple, according to the bailiff; but to Frank it appeared to be no end of a mess. He'd

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have to pay the other man's bill or lose the Darwaza ruby.

The Calcutta law firm issuing the writ had attached a polite note, asking the captain to call at their office to arrange the matter. Pay or deposit the amount.

Now Captain Jocelyn banked at Lucknow; this he explained to the bailiff.

"That's nothing," remarked the latter. "Come over to Bang & Cox's, and through them wire to your banker."

Everything was so simple—with the bailiff. Together they went to Bang & Cox's; in fact, from that moment forth until the money-lender should be paid off Frank and the bailiff would be together, the latter explained politely.

Through the solicitors the arranged-for telegram was sent. Now "Dumpy's" depth of wisdom had extended even to this eventuality, and because of divers reasons, for which he was responsible, the telegram brought forth nothing, not even a reply.

While they were waiting for the answer Frank entertained the bailiff. He was really a good fellow, and it wasn't his fault; but he stuck to his man as closely as Victor Hugo's policeman did to Jean Valjean. They drank together and they smoked together. Captain Frank had visionary ideas of

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putting the bailiff under the table by generous hospitality, but he gave it up just in time to save himself utter annihilation; the bailiff was a strong-headed man.

He had to give The Dove a gallop that afternoon, as a final preparation for his struggle on the morrow.

"Most certainly, it was quite in order," only the bailiff would accompany him, that was all. When they returned no doubt the matter would have been all arranged.

Of course the bailiff couldn't stick close to Jocelyn when he got on The Dove's back. He was thinking over this point while Frank was preparing to mount. As soon as the captain was in the saddle, and The Dove commenced to pick holes in the atmosphere with his feet, it became a certainty with him.

"I'll take your word not to clear out," he said, and sat down where he wouldn't interfere with the horse.

When they got back to Bang & Cox's office they found things just as they had left them. It was depressing, this ominous silence of the wires.

"What if we don't hear from there at all?" asked Jocelyn, apprehensively.

"I'm afraid—you'll have to accompany our friend here to the Queen's Hotel [jail], captain,"

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answered Mr. Bang. "But why not get somebody to go security for the amount?" continued the lawyer, inquiringly; "that's simple."

"Yes, everything's infernally simple, according to you fellows," drawled Captain Frank; "but it seems to me I'm the only simple thing in it. You see," he continued thoughtfully, "I hardly know a soul that's good enough—unless it's Lord Dick."

"The very man!" ejaculated Bang, brightening up. "Just step over to Government House with your friend here and get him to endorse your cheque for five thousand."

Now Lord Dick was one of the best little men ever put together—muscles, head, heart and all; so as soon as Captain Frank told him his trouble Lord Dick said blithely: "Cert', my boy! I'll soon straighten that out."

And he did. "Barrackdale" written across the cheque settled the whole business.

Jocelyn didn't say anything about The Dove to Lord Dick—which was diplomatic. Neither did Lord Dick mention the horse, which was unfortunate—for him. But then The Dove had never shown any form Badger couldn't give pounds to.

Next day the Darwaza Ruby Cup was the event. There had been many entries for it, and

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quite a dozen starters went to the post. Lord Dick rode his own horse, Badger, and of course Captain Frank piloted the diabolical son of Lucifer. Frank knew that it wasn't a question of speed at all; it was only a matter of temper on the part of The Dove. If he ran kindly there was nothing else in it; if the horse sulked Jocelyn would have a good view of the race from the rear.

Darwaza was as much interested as any native prince ever becomes in anything. It's not consistent with the ancient traditions of their lineage to appear to care two straws what happens, so that he sat in considerable state up in the grand stand, and watched the twelve more or less good horses cotillon up and down the course in front of the stand in the preliminary show-off. A dozen good racing men and true had assured him that Badger would win, so the slight interest he evinced was directed toward Lord Dick's handsome bay.

"Dumpy" was watching, with a beating heart, Captain Frank on the Raja's cast-off. If he should win—it was too horrible to think of. He piously invoked heavenly help to avert that disaster.

They were soon away to a good start. Even when the shout went up "They're off!" Darwaza paid little attention. It wasn't kingly to do so, you know; but all the same no movement of the

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many colored silk jackets escaped his full, dark eyes—he saw it all.

The Dove had been shaking his head viciously from side to side at the start, throwing flecks of foam all over his glossy dark skin and the black jacket of his rider. "Steady, you devil!" commanded Captain Frank, giving him a full pressure with his knees in the ribs by way of authority.

And so he galloped, stubbornly, sticking his toes in the hard earth like a proper pig, and almost bucking Frank out of the saddle with his vicious, short, pony jumps.

Jocelyn had all the qualifications of a good rider, of which "common sense" is the greatest, so he didn't bustle the horse, but let him think that he liked it—that it was just what he had expected of him. "He'll get lonesome," he muttered, "when the others begin to leave him."

It was that way all round the back of the course.

Badger, moving like a beautiful piece of mechanism, was well up with the leaders, lying handy for a rush to the front when the proper time should come.

The Dove was last, there could be no doubt about that, for a good three lengths of daylight shone between him and the nearest horse. Still Jocelyn made no effort. There was plenty of time yet, he knew, before they had covered the

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mile and three-quarters, so be it The Dove took it in his head to gallop.

But it looked as though the horse meant to cut it for the whole length of the race. Half a mile from home he was still last, but his rider sat quietly and nursed the iron mouth of the sulky brute with a gentle bit.

As they passed the old race-stand, three furlongs from the finish, something happened. It occurred to The Dove that his master wanted him back there, and he set the bit hard against his bridle-teeth, and, straightening his neck rigid as an iron bar, laid his ears back and galloped as though a thousand bees were bustling his hind quarters.

Captain Frank braced his face to the cutting wind and laid his body close down over the working withers of the mad animal. He carried the horse wide on the outside at the corner; it wouldn't do to get pocketed near the rail with a sour-tempered brute like The Dove—he would give up running and take to savaging the others.

He was going at a terrific pace. One by one they commenced to drop by him as he tore around the turn and into the straight. Then three dropped back in a bunch, looking as though they were standing still. Ahead of him still was Badger, and two others hanging to the leader's quarters. As Jocelyn overhauled them rapidly a mighty

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shout went up from the stand. A babel of voices were shouting: "What's that dark horse coming?" "It's The Dove—he'll win in a walk! Lord, look at him gallop!"

Frank was muttering to himself, "If he'll only stick it to the end." The Dove was thinking, "I'm running away. He wants to keep me back there with the others, but I'll show them—bur-r-r!" That was the clamping of the bit against the hard white of his ivory teeth.

And he *did* show them. Never had such a gallop been seen on the Calcutta course. He won by a clear length from Badger.

Lord Dick thought he had the race well in hand toward the finish, and was trying to remember just what they had heard the ruby was worth when the thunder of vicious pounding hoofs struck on his ear. Before he could pull Badger together for a supreme effort something dark swept by him like a cloud on the outside and won.

The horse ran a quarter of a mile before Frank could pull him up. When he rode back to the scales to weigh in Lord Dick was there. He saw Jocelyn as he dismounted, and a look of blank, utter amazement came into his placid, blue eyes.

"*You*, Jocelyn! nipped me on the post! I wish to God I had let you go to jail; then I'd have got this infernal Darwaza ruby."

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It had taken a kingly effort on the part of Darwaza to keep from shouting when the gallant brown flashed past the judges' stand. Never had he seen such a horse in his life—never.

"Secure him at once," he said to his secretary. And turning to the trainer added, "Eh, Drake, we want that fellow in our stable."

"Dumpy" was paralyzed; he could say nothing. He kept feeling his neck, to see if it were not already broken; they would hang him sure.

Now it had happened that the Raja had not recognized The Dove as Diablo, neither had he heard any man say that The Dove had ever been known as Diablo; so, when the secretary came back and told him Captain Jocelyn didn't want to sell the horse, as he thought he might not suit His Highness, Darwaza himself went down to see about it.

He settled the matter in his own imperious way. "Examine that horse," he said to a veterinary surgeon.

When the latter reported the horse sound as a bell he said: "That settles it; I claim him for twenty thousand rupees."

"Dumpy" was quaking in his shoes. Then, when he saw that the Maharaja did not recognize the horse, hope rose in his breast, and it occurred to him that with Frank's help they might

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yet win that Pattialla Cup that Darwaza wanted so much.

To the Maharaja he spoke thus: "Your 'ighness, this 'orse we've got his also hof an hevil temper, but hif yer 'ighness will consent to request Captain Jocelyn to ride 'im yer sure hof the Pattialla Cup now."

To be a good enemy to a man he didn't like was a pleasant thing to the Raja—a proper thing; but to win the Pattialla Cup was also a great thing—a greater, for there he played against a king, you see—Raja Pattialla. So it was all arranged that way. Captain Frank rode The Dove for Darwaza, and won the Pattialla Cup in grand style.

That night there was much Darwaza enthusiasm in India; also many battalions of empty champagne bottles lying dead on the field of battle next morning.

THE REMITTANCE MAN

The Remittance Man

A TALE OF A PRODIGAL

PART I

DEAN RUTHVEN, living in England, had a son, George. This would have been a very ordinary state of affairs in the ordinary course of events; but that George Ruthven was the son of a dean, or of any other great church dignitary, was most certainly a rather unbelievable fact. His life was about as uncanonized an affair as one could well imagine.

There was nothing terribly wrong—just a chronic condition of unsatisfactory facts judged from a clerical point of view, horse-racing entering largely into the business of his existence.

Well, finally, his father, the Dean, consigned him to the ranching country in Western Canada: the Cargelly District. To place everybody on even terms in this story, I may as well state that from Fort Macleod to Cargelly is known as the "Remittance Belt"; peopled partly by just such as George Ruthven—young men sent there to be out

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of the way of Piccadilly civilization, and maintained by parental remittances.

Of course, George was consigned to some one—he and his ten thousand pounds that was to start him in cattle ranching; but that didn't matter—nothing matters in the West, for things must work out their own salvation there. Besides, what mattered it how the money was spent? It would go anyway: remittance men weren't expected to make money—they were there to spend it; sent by a Providence which answered the prayers of the men in waiting, the Old-timers.

So when the son of the Dean landed in Cargelly he was welcomed as a part of the manna shower, made free of the club, and colloquially branded the "Padre."

There was no Board of Trade in Cargelly—just a billiard table at the club. And the Padre's affairs were arranged as the affairs of the other remittance men had been, by the chiefs, sitting in solemn conclave about this substitute for a council board.

"A shoemaker should stick to his last," was a patent philosophy; the Padre herding cattle was a grotesque conception. What good would it do—the cattle would die of anthrax, or some other infernal thing that was always bothering, and the golden sovereigns he had brought would somehow

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be lost out on the dismal plain. It was the stupid calculation of a man sitting in London, this idea of Padre's proper sphere. What he knew all about was horses and racing—there was no doubt about that; he was jolly well full of the thing.

Of course, he would have to have a ranch and a shack; but that was easy: so many square miles of air, bottomed by a short-grassed plain. It didn't even have to be surveyed; it ran from Smythe's Ranch to Dick's Coulee—ambiguous, but wholly satisfactory for all requirements.

Then a shack was thrown together; the ark, battering-rammed into a square building, would have been an artistic villa by comparison.

The selection of the race-horses required more care. Several of the chaps had horses to sell; incidentally every racing man has a horse or two waiting for a buyer more eager than wise. However, in the end the Padre was fairly well stocked with horses.

Sport of Kings! but the gods had been kind to the dwellers in the wilderness when Dean Ruthven had been hypnotized into sending George the Wayward to the tents of Shem.

And while the direct offerings contributed in London went to the heathen in Africa and divers other places, the indirect, that was the Dean's by right of arrangement, helped clothe the heathen in

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Cargelly and educate his tenderfoot son in a knowledge of men's ways.

Of course, ten thousand pounds requires some accounting for if it be expended, and the Padre sent home a fairy tale that would have gained him a prize in any literary competition. The rolling prairie was handled with conventional skill; the invigorating atmosphere was treated artistically; the future of the cattle trade was culled from government blue books. His own ranch, "The Deanery," was touched upon with diplomatic modesty; it would not do for him to boast of his success at this early stage, he stated, but he had most assuredly stumbled upon a real good thing. He wrote this last statement quite inadvertently, for the good thing so prominent in his mind was Whirlwind, a Montana-bred four-year-old mare; but he allowed the statement to stand.

The Dean was delighted when he received this epistle; the Padre had stated at the club that his father would be.

The career of a racing man is always checkered, and the Padre had his ups and downs—a whole raft of downs.

But there was no doubt about his popularity, for he had just the sunniest nature that a man could possibly have. His friends did not despoil him through any sense of meanness; they simply felt

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that remittance money had been predestined for the good of the greatest number. Socialistic faith condoned all their acts of piracy.

Encouraged by his first literary effort, George drew such Utopian pen-pictures of his ranch life that the Dean began to long for a sight of the paradise which contained his son.

As the ten thousand pounds dwindled into as many pence the Padre waxed more eloquent; and in the end something akin to a falling of the heavens occurred.

That night the Padre strode into the "Ranchers' Club" with the hoarfrost of an approaching domestic storm thick upon him.

"What do you suppose is up, you fellows?" he gasped.

"Not Whirlwind! Not gone wrong, has she?" queried one excitedly.

"Bah!" ejaculated the Padre; "do you think I'd make a fuss about that?"

"Let a *man* guess," commanded Major Lance. "Sunflower has gone back on the Padre." Sunflower was a girl—also in the story.

"Don't chaff," pleaded the Padre, petulantly. "This is serious business. The Guv'nor is coming out—by Jove!"

A silence, an unhealthy quiet, settled over the Council.

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"He'll be here on the twenty-first," continued George, despondently.

"Thunder! the race meet is on the twenty-ninth."

"That's just it," lamented the Padre.

Whirlwind must start; if she didn't, the Winnipeg horse would clean them out.

The Padre thought ruefully of his glamorous account of the cattle ranch and the large herd of many cattle. Besides, the Dean was deuced inquisitive; that was his business, to investigate and lay bare the truth.

"I say, you fellows," cried the Padre, "I haven't got a hoof—not a split hoof, out at 'The Deanery.' What am I to do?"

The others had been thinking only of Whirlwind; this was a new problem.

"You surprise me," said the Major. "Will the Dean expect to see cattle on your ranch?" he queried, with solicitous sarcasm.

"Don't be inquisitive!" interrupted one. "Of course he will. What do you suppose he is coming here for—to play whist?"

The Padre stroked his mustache and looked grateful.

"Who's got any cattle?" queried the Major. "Here, Lancaster, you have."

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"Oh, they're all mixed up with everybody else's on the range."

"All the better," retorted the Major. "Some of you fellows must round up a tidy bunch of a couple of hundred, and run them out to 'The Deanery' for Ruthven. His Guv'nor is coming out here to see something, and we can't give the country a black eye."

"Gad! I should say not," chipped in the owner of Pot Luck Ranch. "He'd go back and stop all emigration; then what would become of you chaps with no remittance Johnnies to batten off?"

"By Jove! You fellows are a good lot," declared the Padre; "that's a weight off my mind. I've been in no end of a blue funk ever since I got the pater's letter. About Whirlwind——"

"Yes, what about the mare?" they all cried in simultaneous anxiety.

"Well, the Guv'nor's death on gee-gees."

"Strange," muttered the Major, sarcastically.

"Don't be a flippant goat," snapped Ruthven.

"He hates race-horses worse than——than——"

"Than the man in opposition," volunteered Pot Luck.

"Exactly—if possible," concurred George.

"Cable him you're dead, Padre," suggested a

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big giant from whose broad shoulders hung a silk-worked buckskin coat.

"That wouldn't stop him," said the Padre; "nothing will stop him—you don't know the Guv'nor, you fellows. When he gets an idea in his head you've simply got to sit tight and dodge the idea—that's all; I know him."

"Coming on the twenty-first," mused the Major; "and the races are on the twenty-ninth—a whole week; doubt if he'll stay that long."

"Hope not," ejaculated the son. "It wouldn't be so bad if I didn't have to ride the measly beast myself; she doesn't gallop well for anyone else. How the deuce am I to work her, with the Guv'nor about?"

"By George!" exclaimed Pot Luck; "if the Dean stays we must get Sunflower to help us out; she's clever—there's no doubt about that—just confide the whole business to her, and she'll keep him out of the way."

Then for days the Council in their spare moments prepared for the advent of Dean Ruthven. The Padre's ranch was stocked with cattle; the shack knocked into some sort of shape; empty bottles thrown into a little coulee; a permanent staff of two servants put on; three or four cow-punchers hired to patrol the range; and an evanescent air of prosperity sprayed over the place.

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All these details were arranged by the Council; the Padre was told off to the training of Whirlwind and the other equine marvels in his racing string.

The Sunflower, so named because she was just like one of the slender, bright, happy, delicate-leaved sunflowers of the prairie, would most certainly have done a great deal more than this for the Padre, because—because—well, never mind. Love is a compelling master. She was of good family, and lived with her brother, Colonel Sloan, who was Indian Agent on the Blood Reserve. The Colonel was not of the Council, and had an idea that his sister might do much better than marry George Ruthven.

As arranged in the calendar, the twenty-first came around in its proper place, and, according to a telegram received, the Dean would arrive by train that night, or, really, next morning, at two o'clock.

The Council passed a resolution, unanimously, that they would act as a bodyguard to the Padre upon the arrival of his father. The late hour was no bar to this, for, as a rule, Cargelly went to bed very early—in the morning.

Divers games of more or less scientific interest helped while away the time, and the Club steward had received orders to pass the word in time for

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them to reach the station before the arrival of Dean Ruthven's train.

George was arrayed in orthodox, more than orthodox, ranch costume. Beginning at the bottom, his feet were tight cramped in narrow, high-heeled, Mexican-spurred riding boots; brown leather chapps, long-fringed up the sides, spread their wide expanse from boot to hip; a belt, wide as a surcingle, acted as a conjunction between these and a flannel shirt, wide open on his sun-browned throat; buckskin coat, wide-brimmed cowboy hat, and a general air of serious business completed the disguise.

All the fellows approved of the get-up. It was the usual antithesis to Regent Street regalia; all the remittance men went in for it when they were young in their Western novitiate.

"It will be worth a thousand pounds to you, at least," the Major said.

"It will gladden your parent's heart," declared Pot Luck; "damned if you don't look as funny as Buffalo Bill."

Ruthven stalked across the hardwood floor of the billiard room proudly; his narrow-heeled boots jingled their old spurs until they clanked a victorious pæan. Everybody looked pleased.

"Touch him for two thousand guineas," hazarded Drake, who was in from his ranch at Stand

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Off; "hanged if I ever saw a better set-up cow-puncher than you are, Padre."

"Wish the Sunflower could see him now," muttered Pot Luck; "she'd give him his congé."

"Train's on time, gentlemen," said the steward, at the billiard-room door; "she'll be here in five minutes."

As the Council trooped out the steward told the second steward that he "reckoned as 'ow the Goov'nor of the Territories was coming up from Regina. There'll be Gimmy-'ell to pay, too, if it's 'im, for 'e's a corker—an all-night bird." He didn't know it was a dean coming all the way from London to see his reformed son.

Ruthven walked up and down the station platform with less assurance than he had in the club billiard room. "I'll be in a bally hat," he confided to the Major, "if the Guv'nor finds out anything; and he's got eyes like a fluorescent lamp. At home he spoiled one of the best *coups* any man ever had, and said he was glad of it, too, though it broke me."

The blare eye of the express swayed drunkenly around a curve; giant wheels crunched from steel rails an unofficial announcement of Dean Ruthven's arrival. It startled the Padre—it was like a premonition of evil. A heavy-eyed porter struggled from the sleeper, dark, bulging objects

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clinging to him at every angle; behind came a slim, stoop-shouldered man in a heavy ulster.

"That's the Guv'nor," murmured Ruthven; and, striding forward, took cheery possession of the Dean. It was an eye-opener to the ecclesiastical traveller, this reception of much multitude: also what a whole-souled grip these Westerners of stalwart frame were so prodigal of. They were introduced *en masse*—for the Western night wind was bleak—as George's fellow-ranchers.

Of course most of them really were ranchers of sorts; and almost every one had a brand—also of sorts. However, Dean Ruthven and his son marched at the head of a goodly company to the hotel. There, in the warm light, the Council were introduced individually, and pressed upon the pleased Dean a whole-souled invitation to spend a week or more at every ranch.

My! but the Dean was proud of his son. He attributed the inspiration that had induced him to send George to Cargelly to the very highest authority. He told the Padre this in a moist voice; he was so sure of it that Ruthven said not a word about Whirlwind or any other dispensation of his own arranging.

After his father had retired Ruthven joined the Council at their club, and the plan of campaign was more definitely traced on the map.

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"We've omitted something," said the Major. "You've got three cow-punchers, Padre, but you'll need an overseer; it quite slipped my memory. They're great on the overseer business in the old land; I know them. One of you fellows will have to volunteer—it adds dignity to the profession."

Drake said he'd go, for he wasn't returning to Stand Off till after the Meet, anyway.

Next day the Dean, young Ruthven, and the newly evolved overseer drove out to "The Deanery," ten miles south. The Western air, made tonic by ozone which it had picked up in the Rockies, plain to view not fifty miles away, tingled the nerves of the London churchman and sweet-breathed his heart until the short-grassed prairie, flower-studded and bright sky-topped, full of its great measure of boundless rest and untortured calm, almost blotted out all other desirable places from the face of the earth. No wonder his son had reformed; in such surroundings a man must become a child of Nature, a simple doer of good deeds—become filled with a desire to benefit his fellow-men. He would take care that friends of his at home, two friends in particular, who also had sons of unblest restlessness, should know of this safe haven for the wayward craft.

Sitting beside his stalwart boy, he of the divers race-horses, the Dean thought these beautiful

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thoughts, and made a mental calculation that, speaking of sordid things, he would spare another five thousand pounds if his son's ranching business seemed to require it. By a remarkable telepathic coincidence, George the Padre was at that very moment wondering how much he might induce his father to advance. He was actually in somewhat of a financial hole; unless he managed to win the Ranchers' Cup at the forthcoming Meet, the hole would grow so deep that he would probably come out in China or some other place.

The prairie road, builded by nothing but the wheels that had fashioned its course, was as smooth as a boulevard, so they were at the ranch in less than two hours. The shack was not like anything the Dean had ever seen in England. Once he had seen a couple of goods carriages that had suffered in a run-off, and, somehow or other, this memory came back to him at sight of his son's residence. He had brought a bag of clothes, meaning to stay several days—but he didn't.

Ruthven and the overseer would ride their horses to where the herd was out on the range, and the Dean would drive the buckboard in which they had come. And there were cattle right enough—cattle all over the range, for the Council had done its work with great executive ability and indiscriminate selection. Probably no rancher had ever

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owned such a variety of brands; if the cattle could have been stood on end, one on top of the other, they would have constituted a fair obelisk, with a charming diversity of hieroglyphics. The Council had either forgotten all about this matter of brands, or trusted to the churchman's ignorance of mundane affairs.

The Dean was delighted; it was like handling the gold from a mine in which he had shares.

George and the overseer rode out to drive up the steers so that the Dean might sit in his buckboard and review them, much as a general has soldiers file past.

"There goes the Toreador's Delight," cried the man from Stand Off to George, as they galloped, pointing to a big short-horn bull. "Where in the name of the Chinook did he come from?"

"He belongs to the Gridiron Ranch," answered the Padre; "though personally he thinks he owns the whole prairie himself, for he's got a beastly temper. I hope he doesn't take umbrage at the Guv'nor's presence, and raid the buckboard."

"He won't bother him so long as he's in the buckboard; I shouldn't like to meet him afoot though. Any of them are bad enough when a man's set afoot; but this brute is worse than a Sioux Indian."

"Gad!" laughed George; "the fellows have

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rounded up every hoof within a hundred miles, I believe. I'm afraid they've overdone it. Instead of parting, the Guv'nor will want a dividend."

As George and his cowboys hustled up the lag-gard animals, Toreador's Delight sauntered nonchalantly up to where the Dean sat in his trap. As Drake had said, if Dean Ruthven had stuck to his ship the *al fresco* bull fight that presently matured would not have materialized; but the Dean was as inquisitive as an old hen, and, like the bait of an evil fate, on the bull's side was a diabolical-looking brand. It was the huge Gridiron of the Gridiron Ranch. More than that it was semi-raw, for they had lately acquired Toreador and thrown their brand on him. "A frightfully cruel thing," mused the Dean; "poor brute!"

Through his humane mind, also meddlesome, flashed divers schemes for marking cattle, quite superior to this barbarous method. "Poor old chap!" he murmured. The bull was eying him with a plaintive, hurt expression, that fairly went to the old man's heart. Swarms of fiendish flies, tormenting the cattle in a general way, assailed this tender brand-mark on the bull with fierce rivalry.

"It's a shame—poor old chap!" ejaculated the Dean, putting the reins down, picking up his umbrella, and descending from his chariot. Toreador

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dor's Delight eyed this departure with eager wistfulness; at least the old man thought so.

"Soh, bossy," called the Dean, in a soothing voice, as he walked over to old Toreador. The bull backed up a little; a man on foot was something new to him—a man on foot in a long, black coat and a high white collar was something utterly new. A horseman was part of the range—he could understand that; but this new something coming straight for him brought a light in his eye that Dean Ruthven should have been more familiar with than he was.

"Soh, bossy! don't be frightened—I won't hurt you," he assured the bull, edging around to drive the flies from his tender side.

Toreador answered nothing; he was simply waiting for the attack to begin—he was ready.

There! with a deft side-step and a brush of the umbrella the Dean had put the wicked torturing flies to flight.

As the brass-ringed end of the umbrella touched the seared bars on Toreador's side he gave a bellow of outraged surprise. That was where the attack was to be made, eh? With lowered head, in which fairly blazed two lurid, red-streaked eyes, he whisked about, and steadied himself for a charge.

Even as the flies had fled, so fled the Dean; he

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departed with extreme velocity. Light of frame and nimble of foot, he saved himself from the first rush, and made for the buckboard. Also did Toreador. It seemed something substantial to get at, this part of the thing that had stung him in the side.

As Dean Ruthven skipped behind the wheels the bull crashed into it; the horse, surmising that there was trouble in the air, diligently pattered over the plain, leaving one of the hind wheels strung on Toreador's horns. The Dean had thrown all his ecclesiastical dignity to the winds—even his coat, and was busily heading for the much-despised shack.

Toreador gathered up the coat with a frantic jab, and it nestled down over the spokes of the wheel he was carrying.

Fortunately for the humane parson his son had seen from a distance his attempt on the friendship of the bull. "My God—Drake!" he exclaimed; "the Guv'nor's afoot! Old Toreador will pin him sure as a gun!"

"Of all the stupid tricks—gallop, man!"

With quirt and spur the two lashed their broncos into a frenzy of speed. The prairie swirled dizzily under the reaching hoofs of their straining steeds. Would they be in time? The crash of the buckboard startled a muffled cry from

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George as he drove cruel, cutting rowels up his bronco's flank. Would he be in time?

On they galloped, neck and neck, throwing loose their lariats as they leaned far forward and coaxed their broncos to give the last ounce of speed that was in their strong limbs. Even the horses knew! How they galloped! The racing seat of young Ruthven helped his mount, and he drew away from the man from Stand Off.

When Toreador checked for an instant at the black coat, the horsemen were not a hundred yards away. The Dean was fleeing for his life. Now behind him thundered the maddened bull; fifty yards! thirty! twenty! What an interminable age it took to cut down the brute's lead.

Now Ruthven's bronco had his nose on Toreador's quarter, galloping as though he knew a life was at stake. His rider raised his right arm and swung the lasso. Would it go true? Would it hold? The bull's horns were low as he galloped—would the rope miss? If it did, by a hair's breadth, the Dean, who was almost under the huge nose, would surely be killed.

"Good boy!" shrieked Drake, as the lariat sang in its tense strength and the noose slipped tight and strong over Toreador's horns. "*Swish!*" went the other rope; and the two broncos, thrown on their haunches, fairly skidded over the smooth

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grass plain, carried by the impetuous rush of the huge bull.

But Toreador was stopped; and the Dean, with blanched face, tumbled in a heap, twenty feet off.

"You're not hurt, Guv'nor?" called the son, as he and Drake, sitting well back in their saddles, held the snorting Toreador tight-lashed in subjection.

"No, thank Providence!—and you also, boy; just shaken up a bit—that's all."

"Well, you'd better walk on to the shack, if you can manage it, and we'll give this brute a run that'll cure him for a day or two."

It was most decidedly a close shave; it also most effectually cured the Dean of any lurking desire to spend a few days in the seclusion of a quiet ranch.

"Your father will want to leave soon, sure, after this," confided Drake.

"By Jove! we were just in time," muttered the Padre.

After the Toreador had been galloped, quirt-lashed and bronco-hustled until his tongue lolled like a wet rag, the two horsemen cantered to the shack. The Dean had had enough inspection for one day; also he was too much battered about to sit a saddle to Cargelly; and, as has been said, Toreador had thrown the buckboard slightly out of gear.

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If the churchman had been proud of his son before over the huge herd of borrowed cattle, he now fairly worshipped him because of his manly rescue. He dwelt at great length upon the hard life his dear boy must be leading—of course this was quite true, literally, but the Dean meant a totally different hard life—a hard life of exposure, riding the ranges, roping cattle, and all the rest of it.

But the Padre had not picked up the roping business as a working exercise; he had taken to it as part of the racing game, so that he might compete in the annual sport.

Next morning they jogged back to Cargelly. The Padre was wondering whether his father would decide to leave that night or next day. The Dean set his mind at rest on this point by observing: "George, at first I meant to spend but a couple of days with you, but—but—well, never mind—you'll be pleased to know that I have changed my mind——"

"He's going to-night," thought the Padre.

"I shall stop at least a week—I can manage it," and the Dean laid a hand tenderly on his son's arm.

The Padre groaned inwardly.

That night, after the Dean had gone to bed, the Council took up all these many matters, and

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discussed them diplomatically. The saving of the old gentleman's life would, of course, bring funds to the Padre; also the stocking of the ranch had been most successfully managed. If it weren't for the race meeting there could be no harm in the Dean's staying with them; but how in the world were they to keep him out of the way long enough to try Whirlwind with the new horse, Gray Bird, that Ruthven had just got up from Montana? In fact, what were they to do with him on race day itself?

"We could manage the trial," said Major Lance.

"But I've got to be there myself," pleaded the Padre, "and I can't leave the Guv'nor."

"Do any of you fellows know a church—say ten or twenty miles out?" queried the Major.

"There's one at Bow River Crossing," answered Drake.

"That'll do," declared the officer; "you can work it. Get the clergyman there to invite the Dean to some sort of a tea-fight—read a lecture to young men on the evils of amateur sport, or something of that sort."

"What about me?" broke in the Padre.

"You won't have to go," retorted Lance; "one of the fellows will slip out in the morning and start a fire in the grass on your ranch and gallop

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back in time to nail you for that business—see?”

“And have the trial that day?” queried Pot Luck.

“Yes.”

“Jupiter! but who’ll attend the lecture?” asked Drake of Stand Off. “I want to see the trial.”

“So you may, Dick,” assured the Major; “but the other fellows from the Crossing needn’t bother.”

It was a brilliant idea, worthy of the Council. It was arranged Thursday night. Friday and also Saturday the Dean clung to his son with appalling persistence; where the Padre went his father went; to the club—everywhere.

A gloom settled down over the Council; billiards, even, were a thing of the past. The cry “Here they come!” rang through the ranchers’ retreat at least a dozen times a day. Magazines, and papers, and books, that heretofore had only served as ornament, were constantly lying at everybody’s elbow. The Dean thought them the most studious lot of men he had ever met; they were always reading.

Friday afternoon the Dean said he would have a nap at the hotel. George hurried down to the club, and the Council were soon deep in an intricate puzzle over some red, white, and blue ivory

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chips. In the middle of it a steward opened the door and announced: "A reverend gentleman a-lookin' for Mr. Ruthven!" At his shoulder was the Dean.

George sprang to his feet. Luckily the Major was playing. "I assure you, Mr. Ruthven," he said, addressing the Padre, and seemingly quite oblivious of the Dean's entrance; "I assure you that you need not grab up the cards in that way, and try to stop the gentlemen from playing, for we are not breaking the rules of the club at all; this is not gambling—it's a new game called 'Stock the Ranch.' It's purely scientific, similar to the German military game. These counters represent steers, and its study is a great help to young ranchers."

"I'm glad to hear that," gasped young Ruthven, with a sigh of relief, "because—because—as butler—I mean, as a director of this club——"

Just then he caught sight of his father, and welcomed him with eager effusion—so glad he had come down, and all the rest of it!

Major Lance had saved the day.

That night the Dean gave his son a check for two thousand pounds. He had diplomatically drawn from the young hopeful the information that such a sum would be most acceptable; in fact, that it was sorely needed. All the previous money

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had gone in ranch and stock. Of course, in reality a certain amount of it had gone in stock—racing stock. The Dean could see himself that a more commodious shack was desirable; also fencing; in fact, the utter absence of fences had rather mystified the churchman.

Saturday the Padre had a queer jumble of remarks for the Major.

"Look here, old man," he said, "the Guv'nor's too good a sort to humbug—I'm going to chuck it after the Meet."

"If it goes how?" queried Major Lance.

"Whichever way it goes. The Guv'nor's given me two thousand sov's to buy wire fences and things——"

"And you're going to put it on Whirlwind," interrupted the Major; "I know."

"No, I'm not, nor on Gray Bird."

"Why not?" queried the Major; "it's yours. Put it all on and make a killing."

"It isn't mine to bet with. What I have up already I must race for, but I'm not going to humbug the Guv'nor any more. If things go wrong over this race I'm going to slip away—chuck the whole business after the Guv'nor's gone."

"And if things go right?"

"I'm also going to chuck something then—the racing game; but I stay—sabe? Stay and buy

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steers. And I'm going to cut you fellows. I don't mind playing up with the boys—I've done a lot of it—but when a fellow's got to lie out of everything it isn't good enough. When I saw the Guv'nor down in front of that locoed bull, and all my fault, too, having that mixed lot on the range, it set me thinking, and I'm just getting some clear light in on that operation."

"Well, well," exclaimed the Major, impatiently; "perhaps you're right. But you're not going to bungle the race for the Ranch Plate, are you?"

"No, I've got to win that; and we've got to have the trial, too. But I'll tell you what it is, the Dean will have a mighty slim gang at his lecture."

"Well," queried the Major, "what are you going to do about it?"

"Stock the meeting for him; hire some cowboys and fellows to go, just as you chaps ran cattle in on the range."

Major Lance whistled. "By Jove! Padre, you're turning out quite a diplomat."

This was a good idea; and the two men of resource went out into the highways and byways and gathered about as unstudious a lot of attendants for the meeting as had ever entered the portals of any place of worship. They were paid to attend, also were given cayuses to ride out.

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Monday was a day of many things; a day of divers interests. The prairie fire that had been planned for the Padre's ranch conflagrated duly on time, and the Dean had to sacrifice the pleasure of his son's attendance at the lecture.

As Ruthven had feared, the regular ranchers from the Crossing District, members of the Council, and otherwise, shirked the talk, and headed for the race course, leaving their seats to the motley gang of paid hirelings.

Seven people cannot be said to constitute a very large audience, but there sat just that number facing Dean Ruthven in the little church at Bow River Crossing.

The Dean was a man of acute sense, in religious matters at any rate, and he tempered the wind to the short lamb—that is, having a short audience, he gave them a short sermon; and, somehow feeling by intuition their moderate attainments, gave them what was really a straight talk.

Red Mike—one of the hirelings—had gone to the church in considerable trepidation, for he had heard much of the solemnity of such functions. The Dean's sensible talk pleased him so much that, when the clergyman was leaving, Mike felt it necessary to say a few words of thankful congratulation. Holding out a big paw, handy in the arts of bronco-busting and liquor-handling,

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he said to him: "Hanged if I don't like you, Parson."

Dean Ruthven was flattered, naturally; this homage of the uncouth cowboy was gratifying. He stammered a deprecating remonstrance, claiming that he had done so little to merit the other's good opinion.

"Yes, you have, Parson," Mike assured him. "You're all right; you've asked me straight why I like you so much, an' I'll give it to you straight back. I was a bit shifty of ministers, havin' heard as how they pumped it into a fellow to beat the band, but to-day you've monkeyed less with religion than anybody I mos' ever heard speak on the subject—that's what!"

While all this was going on the men who were supposed to be fighting fire were busy over on Cargelly race course trying Whirlwind and the new Montana horse, Gray Bird.

PART II

EVEN as the advent of Red Mike had come as a slight surprise to the Parson, so also the laborers on the race course received a shock, for Gray Bird beat Whirlwind most decisively.

He must be a wonder, they all knew. Now, most assuredly, they would beat the horse from

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Regina, and the mare from Edmonton, and the two cracks that were coming up from Winnipeg. Even Whirlwind could do it, they thought, but here was a much greater. What in the world would the Council do with all the money they would loot from the foreign Philistines?—that is, if a Damoclesian sword which hung over their necks did not fall. The sword was Dean Ruthven, and the falling of the sword would be his discovery of his son's racing game and the stopping of it.

"He'd stop everything!" declared the Padre. "Didn't I tell you that he forced me in England to give up one of the greatest certainties any man ever had, when I could have won twenty thousand quid over it?"

George was much dissatisfied with the trial, in a way; but he had ridden the mare himself, and she seemed trying all right enough. But the fact of the matter was that, owing to his father's presence, Whirlwind had been thrown out of work considerably; George hadn't been able to ride her regularly. Also his father's mishap, and the many other things, had slightly unstrung his usual good nerve, so he had ridden the mare with an impatient eagerness born of the last few days of nervous strain.

At any rate he determined to ride Gray Bird

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in the race, and trust Whirlwind to somebody else.

So far as the money was concerned it would not matter which won, for they would both start as his entry.

But he would give the mare every chance. She was a nervous, high-strung beast, as sensitive as an antelope, and the Padre devised a clever scheme. He would send her out to his ranch and keep her there until race day; then she might be led in quietly, and start in a sweet temper. In his town stables, near the course, surrounded by other horses, and tortured by the bustle of a race preparation, Whirlwind would fret, and go to the post in an erratic humor. She could have her working gallops out at the ranch in the meantime.

Later this idea worked itself out with variations.

Upon Dean Ruthven's return to the Cargelly Hotel, and as he was passing through the office, a young clerk, of an intellect such as fate always seizes upon when she wishes to curdle the milk, called the reverend gentleman's attention and handed him two missives. One was a letter, the other a carelessly folded note decorated with the terse superscription: "Padre Ruthven."

The Dean carried them to his room. The letter was of no moment—an invitation from a brother ecclesiast; the note was of a more complex nature,

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involving much deliberation and three distinct perusals. This is what it contained:

Dear Old Padre: Have just come back from the Blood Reserve. If you can slip away from the Guv'nor you'd better go out ; Sunflower wants her Hiawatha. Go out to buy hay for all those cattle on your ranch.

DICK.

As Dean Ruthven thought it over carefully it appeared quite as bad an affair as the rush of old Toreador. He was clever enough to see through it at once. Sunflower was an Indian girl, evidently of the Blood tribe, and she wanted to see her Hiawatha, his son George. Also George was to slip away on a clumsy excuse of buying hay. Dick was a man of fruitful resource, without doubt, but his grim joke of addressing the note "Padre" Ruthven had been a most providential piece of humor, for it had discovered to the father this most terrible state of affairs.

His son, the pride of his heart, and just when he was doing so well, too, to take up with a squaw ! This was one of the very things he had feared slightly ; he had read much of squaw men—men who had married Indian women ; it meant their utter ruin.

He folded up the note slowly, deliberately, and threw it on the table with a sigh. For an hour he sat with his head on his arm, crouched in a broken

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heap, trying to shut out this terrible vision of a squaw siren. He was roused by the energetic tramp of his son's footstep at the door.

"Good-evening, sir," cried George, cheerfully, as he entered; "you got back safely?"

"Did you get on all right?" asked the father, schooling his voice with an effort.

"Oh, yes; it was a great trial—I mean," said George, checking himself suddenly as he remembered that his mission that day was supposed to be one of fire-fighting; "I mean, the fire nearly beat us; it was a great trial to all the fellows—there was a high wind."

"There's a note on the table, evidently for you," said the father, indicating with his hand the terrible missive. "The clerk gave it to me, and I brought it up."

"Excuse me, sir," and the Padre read Dick's brilliant literary effort. He read it twice, watching the Dean furtively from the corner of his eye. He was wondering if his father had read the note. Why, in the name of fate, had his bronco-headed friend, Dick, addressed it "Padre" Ruthven? The Dean gave no sign; perhaps he hadn't read it; but George felt that he must prepare for that eventuality, so he said: "It's about some hay out on the Blood Reserve that I can buy for my cattle. The Indians put up hay, you know, for all

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the ranchers. My friend mentions a girl's name, and I fancy her brother's got the hay to sell. She interprets, you know—especially if her brother's away."

It was a floundering sort of diplomacy, this jumble of the Padre's; but when a man is suddenly thrown into deep water he doesn't always swim his very best; besides, there was a great chance that his father had not read the note.

The clergyman gave no sign—he preserved a silence as undemonstrative as the famed reticence of Dean Maitland; but next morning, when his son galloped off to purchase the apocryphal hay, he thought out a line of action which he conceived would straighten this tangle without scandal.

He rather startled the son on his return by declaring that he meant to spend two or three days out at his ranch. The news was almost too good for belief. Now the Race Meet could go on; surely the gods had clasped the Padre to their hearts.

"I wish to look more closely into this ranch life," declared the Dean.

"The cattle will be scattered now, I'm afraid," said the Padre; "the fire has driven them out on to other ranges."

"All the better," answered his father, "for I

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shall be in no danger from short-tempered bulls; I really want a quiet rest."

Before George and his father started for the ranch the Council learned of this happy turn of affairs. The Padre did not have to make any excuses to get back to the important business on hand, for the Dean was equally anxious to get rid of him—he had some business of his own to look into. So the Padre, after seeing that his father was particularly comfortable, and leaving instructions that the whole business of the temporary ranch staff was to be the making of the reverend gentleman's stay pleasant, so that he might abide contentedly with them, returned to town, and prepared for his big *coup* with Gray Bird on the morrow, Wednesday.

Dean Ruthven was full of the great undertaking he had in hand. He had determined to go quietly to the Blood Reserve, find this Indian girl, Sunflower, and use his moral influence to have her break off the unhappy alliance with his son. He would even pay her a large sum of money.

What he would do with the son afterward he could not determine; first, the cruel infatuation must be disrupted.

The Padre had said in leaving that he would gallop out in the morning to see his sire.

That night the Council were as men who had es-

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caped an avalanche. Diligently they prepared for the financial collapse of all who believed not in young Ruthven's ability to win the Ranch Plate.

The Council knew that Gray Bird would surely win; even Whirlwind might win in spite of her poor showing in the trial; at any rate the Padre had them both entered—they would both start, and the money that would come to their coffers would be like a great remittance from the old land.

Now Wednesday morning, which was race day, the Dean, full of his project, casually learned from one of the ranchmen that the Blood Reserve was close by—a matter of four miles, with a good trail.

The son came out early; solicitously took extra precautions for the comfort of his respected parent; spent a little time in the stable, and went back to town with the cheerful information that his father had no intention of visiting Cargelly that day.

When the cowboys rode out on to the range, the Dean, in lieu of his own clerical frock, slipped on a corduroy coat belonging to his son, went quietly to the stable, and saddled a dark-brown mare he discovered there; it was Whirlwind, but Dean Ruthven knew nothing of her racing life.

He had some difficulty over saddles, rejecting a

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heavy, Mexican, bronco-busting affair with disdain—it was like putting an easy-chair on a horse—as cumbersome. There was nothing else but an English-made saddle, looking suspiciously light; but it would do for an easy canter of four miles. The Dean had ridden much in his young days, and his gentle seat and light hands pleased the nervous Whirlwind; she was like a lamb with him. "What a lovely beast!" he muttered.

At the Blood Reserve he found a group of red-painted buildings; he had expected only Indian lodges, not knowing anything of an Agency. It was a distinct relief. If they contained white people, by diplomacy he could possibly gain much help.

Whirlwind had been there before, so she took her rider to Colonel Sloan's door as straight as fate might have desired.

Hospitality made everything easy; besides, the Dean first of all was evidently a gentleman. "Just a little call," the reverend gentleman explained.

Whirlwind was stabled, and in the evolution of events many things came to light. The visitor was Dean Ruthven; Colonel Sloan was the intimate friend of the Dean's most intimate friend in London; ten minutes' conversation developed that; also the invitation to luncheon which followed was eagerly accepted.

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The Colonel's sister, Marion, who was the Sunflower—only, of course, the Dean knew it not—charmed him as she did all others; he almost forgot his mission in the pleasant surroundings.

He and Colonel Sloan pulled together as though they had been friends all their lives. Into the clergyman's mind came the light of a cheerful prospect. Providence had surely sent him straight to the Agent; this firm-mannered gentleman would help him, he knew. If the Indian maid, Sunflower, were obdurate and refused to listen to reason, no doubt the Colonel with his authority could send her to some other reserve—Kamchatka, or any far-distant place.

So, as soon as the pleasant-voiced Marion had withdrawn from the room, Dean Ruthven in hesitating policy broached the subject.

"My dear Colonel Sloan," he commenced; "may I—may I—ask you to help me in a matter which is giving me great uneasiness—a most delicate subject, I assure you?"

"With all my heart, my dear sir," answered the gallant Colonel; "I am at your service—you may command me."

"Well—to tell you the truth—my son, George, has, I fear, contracted an unfortunate alliance. No doubt it's one of those reckless infatuations which young men are prone to, and probably he hasn't

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any serious intentions; but in that case it is, if possible, even worse—quite dishonorable; I assure you, my dear Colonel, I consider it dishonorable on his part.”

Colonel Sloan was listening with well-bred interest, passing his hand leisurely down the back of a fox terrier that had jumped on his knee. He felt flattered by the confidence of this church dignitary; also he knew young Ruthven fairly well by reputation.

The speaker continued: “Yesterday, quite by accident, or, perhaps it was the finger of Providence, I discovered the existence of this intrigue.”

Maid Marion came into the room at this juncture, and the Colonel, skilled in resourceful diplomacy, gave her a commission that required her considerable absence. When she had gone the Dean proceeded:

“This is a matter that possibly concerns someone in your charge, Colonel—the girl, I mean.”

The Colonel started visibly, but tipped the fox terrier from his knee to conceal his confusion.

“You, no doubt, will have an influence over her,” said the Dean, with futile imbecility, “so I shall confide in you to the utmost extent.”

The Colonel coughed and lighted a cigar. What in the world was coming!

“Now, I think it must be broken off at all costs,”

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declared his tormentor; "at all costs; in fact, I am prepared to pay a large sum of money, if necessary, to prevent this misalliance."

"Quite so!" interjected Colonel Sloan, in a dry voice.

"For, you see, it would never do; would it, Colonel?"

"I think not," answered the Agent.

"No, it would break his mother's heart. Fancy taking a girl of that sort home to England—if his intentions were really honorable, which I fear they are not. I know I should feel the disgrace very keenly."

"Everybody would!" declared the Colonel, emphatically.

"Quite true. I have no doubt you know the girl I refer to, for, as I have said, she is in your charge.

"Possibly," commented the Colonel, dryly; "you haven't mentioned the young lady's name."

"She's not exactly a lady," corrected the Dean; "I refer to a girl known as 'Sunflower.' "

The Colonel sprang to his feet with an exclamation horrible in the ears of a conscientious churchman.

"What do you mean, you hound? Have you come here to insult my sister through me—and over your profligate son?"

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The Dean was also on his feet, the light of a dreadful fright in his watery gray eyes.

"Insult you, my dear sir—your sister—what is all this—what are you talking about?"

"Yes, my sister, Sunflower—Marion."

The stricken Dean moaned. "I understood that Sunflower was an Indian girl—a squaw; at least, I thought she was. This puts an entirely different face on the matter—please forgive me—I—I—oh, what shall I say? Forgive me—I will explain."

The explanation was tortuous, broken, full of deep humiliation, contrite repentance, and in all the misery of it a glorious sense of relief that his son had not taken up with a squaw, but was evidently in love with this beautiful girl of good family. Peace finally reigned, for the Colonel was a man of much sense, and felt not like humiliating this churchman who was so thoroughly in earnest over his son's welfare.

"I am so glad I came, in spite of the terrible blunder I made," wept the Dean. "I do hope that—that—we shall understand each other better—I may say, be closer united. Your sister has quite won my heart, and I hope she has George's also."

At that moment a stranger knocked at the door. When admitted he explained that he had come for

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the brown mare the Dean had ridden. She was wanted in Cargelly.

"Impossible!" declared Dean Ruthven. "How am I to get back to the ranch? In fact, I think I shall go into Cargelly now"—and he turned and smiled on Colonel Sloan. Yes, that was his best plan—he would ride the mare into Cargelly.

But the messenger was obdurate.

"All right," declared the Dean, blithely; "I'll ride into Cargelly on her—I'm most anxious to get in at once;" he nodded pleasantly at the Agent, as an indication that he meant to do something of interest to him.

"She's got to be led in, sir," objected the man; "Padre Ruthven had her entered in a race to start at——"

"Heavens! a race!" gasped the Dean; "my son racing!"

Also the stranger got a shock; he didn't know that the clerical purloiner of Whirlwind was Padre Ruthven's father. He should have been better schooled when he was sent for the mare.

"Excuse me, my dear sir," the Dean said to his host; "I must stop this race. I'll take the mare there myself," he added fiercely to the newcomer.

Into the saddle clambered the Dean; eagerly he galloped for Cargelly; at his side loped the messenger. From time to time he consulted his watch;

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would he be in time to stop it? For, as they sped, the man explained, idiotically enough, that the son was riding Gray Bird in the race, and that he was to have ridden Whirlwind himself.

With easy swing the thoroughbred mare loped over the smooth prairie trail. If it had not been for the cayuse galloping laboriously beside her she would have gone faster.

"There's plenty of time, Guv'nor," cried his companion; "don't knock the mare about." He had an idea that, perhaps, he would yet outwit the Dean and secure Whirlwind for the race. He even thought of throwing his lariat over the churchman and pulling him out of the saddle. But he gave up this idea; many things might happen; the mare might get away; even the Dean might break his neck.

Four miles off the square, unadorned houses of Cargelly rose on the level prairie like huge packing-boxes. A motley multitude of twisting figures could be seen to the right; that was the race-course—even the Dean surmised that.

Would he be in time? His watch told him that it was twenty minutes to four.

As they drew nearer the brown mare pricked her ears wistfully; the scent of a speed battle came to her nostrils, and she rattled the snaffle-bit restlessly against her white teeth. Straight for the

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race mob galloped the Dean; close at his heels loped the cayuse. Swifter glided the prairie under the two horsemen, for Whirlwind was warming to the race taint that was in the air.

"What time—is it—Guv'nor?" panted the man at Dean Ruthven's elbow.

"Two—minutes to four," he gasped in answer.

"They're at—the—post," pumped the other as the wind drove into his set teeth. He could see a dozen horsemen grouped near a man with a red flag, straight in front of them.

Now it happened that the starting-post for this race, which was one and a quarter miles, was at the point where their trail cut through the course.

Young Ruthven was one of the horsemen. He was in a rage. What had become of Whirlwind? He had sent his man, Ned Haslam, a good rider, too, out for her—Ned was to have ridden Whirlwind; next to the Padre himself, she would gallop better for Haslam than anyone else.

He thought that, perhaps, Ned might have her at the post waiting, for there was no weighing out to be done—the race terms being for gentlemen riders, catchweights over one hundred and forty pounds. He had not declared her a non-starter, and his two horses were coupled in the betting. But neither Haslam nor Whirlwind was at the post.

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As Gray Bird swerved away from the starter's flag, and swung around on his hind feet, young Ruthven caught sight of the two horsemen.

"Hold off for a minute," he cried eagerly to the starter; "here comes Whirlwind at last; I think Ned is on her back, too. She'll be under your orders in another minute and can start."

One of the Winnipeg riders uttered an objection.

"She'll have all the worse of it," retorted the Padre, "for her idiotic rider has got tangled up in some delay, and has had to gallop the mare."

"I'll wait," said the starter; "line up, and get ready."

There could be no technical objection.

The Padre beckoned with his whip for Whirlwind's rider to come to the post; the Dean answered with a shout when he recognized his son.

"Back there—line up!" called the starter. "Whirlwind must start as soon as she gets in the bunch—I can't wait."

Nobody recognized the Dean in his tight-buttoned corduroy coat—not even his son; for they were busy trying for the best of the start.

"Hold on!" called the Dean, as he swung on to the course from the trail.

"Go to the devil!" yelled the starter; "I've no time to let you breathe your horse!"

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Even if the starter had wished to delay matters the Dean would not have been of the party, for Whirlwind, trained to the quick start, keen for the strife that had been of all her life, rushed through the eager straining horses, carrying them with her.

"Go!" yelled the starter, dropping his flag as they flashed by him all in a bunch.

Down went the second flag! It was a start—a beautiful start!

As the Dean flashed by his son the Padre recognized him. Great Cæsar! Had the Guv'nor gone mad! It was like a nightmare; he rode as one in a dream. But in front of him was the terrible tangibility of his clerical father riding in a wicked horse-race. Of course the Guv-nor was crazy, but—and he took a pull at Gray Bird's head—he couldn't afford to throw away the race on that account.

At his flank raced the mare from Edmonton; behind, half a length, thundered the two from Winnipeg. Past the crude grand-stand on the first round they swung in this order. Whirlwind had the lead and she meant to keep it; that had always been her idea of a race. Speed she had in plenty; but when horses were in front they threw fierce-cutting sand in her face, and the snapping of the rider's shirts in the wind and the cracking of their whips bothered her.

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How she liked the jockey on her back! His strong pull on the bit steadied her around the curves; firm-braced in the saddle he sat quiet—just as a jockey should, she reasoned.

In the Dean's face was the horror of a lifetime compressed into a tiny tablet. With set teeth and braced knees he pulled strong at the mad brute's head. "She's running away with me," he muttered; "I shall be disgraced for life!"

Hard on the right rein he tugged as Whirlwind hugged the circling rail on the left. If he could only pull her off the course!

"That's right," whispered the mare; "steady me a bit wide." Out of her large, wise eye she watched the horses behind. Ha, ha! such sport! They would never catch her.

"Good old girl!" muttered the Padre, as the strong, brown quarters in front of him gathered and straightened with the easy motion of a steam piston. Now the broad hoofs scattered the gravel back in their faces; truly she was a picture.

He eased Gray Bird back after they passed the stand on the first round. The Regina horse slipped into his place at the mare's heels. On his right pounded a big bay from Winnipeg; half a length back was the gray mare from Edmonton running under a strong wrap.

Madly the grand-stand cheered as Whirlwind,

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still in the lead, swung into the straight. "Who is the jockey?" someone asked. "Thought Ned Haslam was to ride for the Padre—that's not Ned."

"He's a mighty good jockey, though—whoever he is," another answered.

A quarter of a mile from the finish the Winnipeg horse, Cyclone, far-reaching in his big stride, was lapped on Whirlwind's quarter. The Padre saw this; that was what he was lying back for—to see things, and put them right. Into the flank of Gray Bird he drove a spur, and the Montana horse, quivering with the strain of his giant muscles, pushed past the white-faced chestnut that was running him neck and neck, and crept up until his long, sloping shoulder touched the huge thigh of the Winnipeg Cyclone.

Never had such a race been seen in Cargelly. The stand watchers rose to their feet—stood on their very toes in excitement. Would the mare last out—the gallant little Whirlwind? Surely she would, for her jockey, sitting with set face, riding with superb judgment, had not moved on her; not once had he raised his whip. Surely he knew that his mount had plenty in hand, or he would have urged her with whip and spur.

"Cyclone will win!" said a Winnipeg man, his voice tense with excitement.

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"I'll lay you a thousand the mare beats him!" said Major Lance huskily.

"Done!" cried Winnipeg.

Cyclone's big nose was at Whirlwind's shoulder now, and they were a furlong from the finish.

"If my rider sits tight," murmured the mare, "that brute will never catch me."

The Dean sat tight—there was nothing else in it for him; a false move on the tiring mare, well he knew, might throw her under the feet of the galloping horses. All the evil that could come to him, all the disgrace, had materialized at the start; therefore he sat tight and waited.

The Padre pushed Gray Bird still farther up, fairly lifting him at every jump. He could not win, he felt convinced, but a little bustle at the side of Cyclone might juggle his stride a bit.

Ah! what a race it was home to the finish post! The big horse, strong galloping, lashed and cut with whip and spur, strained and far-stretched his strong muscles to overtake the smooth-gliding little brown mare but a neck in front. Even the neck lead shortened, and still the grim figure on her back swerved her not a hair's breadth from her stride. Now it was a head, just a small brown head in front. There was only silence in the grandstand; no noise in the air at all—nothing but the

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muffled roar of hoofs pounding the turf, and the sharp crack of a quirt on Cyclone's ribs.

Only the Judge, sighting straight across the two finish posts, knew whether a bay or brown nose had caught his eye first. In the stand a babel of voices was yelling: "Cyclone wins! Whirlwind's got it!"

Then, after a little waiting hush, number five went up. That was Whirlwind's number.

The Padre galloped on and overtook the mare.

He threw himself from Gray Bird's back. Back he led Whirlwind. "Sit here for a minute, father, and rest," he said, lifting the old man down; and in a trice he had the saddle on the back of the seat. It was the weighing scales. And the weight was sufficient—two pounds over the hundred and forty.

Eagerly the men who had amassed sudden wealth gathered about this new rider the Padre had unearthed from somewhere. What a clever trick of the Padre's it had been, to be sure. Nobody but Major Lance recognized the man in the corduroy coat. The Padre fought them off, and carried his father from the course, leaving the care of the horses and all the rest of it to the Major and others of the Council.

There was an aftermath of reproach and exhortation and remorse on the part of the Dean,

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and contrition on the part of the Padre, and the assurance of an undoubted reformation. Willingly he promised to race no more, and where are there fathers without forgiveness in their hearts? There was not one in Cargelly anyway, because, at the end of all things the Dean knew, because he performed the ceremony himself, that Marion, the Sunflower, would guard his son's moral interests as only a good wife can.

MY FRIEND THE COUNT

My Friend the Count

CALCUTTA is the Mecca of English Griffins. A "Griffin" is not a very serious animal, he is only a junior who goes out to that land thinking he knows very much more than he really does. I was a Griffin. I went to Calcutta; therefore things happened me—this race thing happened.

It was ordered of the gods of a certainty—Vishnu, or Khrishna, or somebody in the Hindoo pantheon; for I did not know a race-horse from a *dhoby's* donkey, and had been taught that betting was one of the cardinal sins.

It is considered necessary to be versed in the Hindustani language to prosper in India, but my good fortune came to me through bedeviling the few words I knew of that back-handed language which runs from right to left.

I had been dining with young Steel, who was in indigo, and half-a-dozen other men, at their chummery out at Ballypore, and was on my way back to my quarters in a gharry when the founda-

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tion for my present fortune was laid by The Thing that had it in charge.

When we turned into Chowringhee Road my Hindoo driver pulled up his ramshackle horse, and peering down at me through the *jilmill* asked, in Hindustani, where I wished to go.

Suddenly thrown on my own resources linguistically, my intellect wavered for a minute, groping about blindly in the dark for the word meaning my house. All at once, like a revelation it came to me. Yes, there could be no doubt about it—it was the right word; and I answered promptly "*jahannam jao*," sinking back in my seat with a sigh of relief as I realized how well I was getting on with their barbarous speech.

My gharry man cheerfully answered, "*achcha sahib!*" (very good, sir) and with eager profanity urged his rest-loving steed to hurry the sahib forward.

It was The Thing, Khrishna or otherwise, that whispered that word in my ear, else it had not come so nimbly to my memory. Later in the night I discovered that it did not mean my house at all.

It was a long drive from Ballypore, and the dinner had been one of much full-bodied muligatawny, and cheerful-spirited Monopole, all tending to make one sleep even in a gharry with an action like a twin-screw torpedo boat. I slept.

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I was awakened by somebody tugging at my sleeve, and a voice was calling plaintively, "Sahib, sahib!"

"What is it?" I asked dreamily, for the air seemed rich with the music of an Indian mutiny.

The next second I was awake; the gharry had stopped; there was surely a battle on. The atmosphere was full of flying missiles, and language of questionable moral tone. Brick-bats and Hindustani descended parabolically, jostling each other in their eager flight from the flat roof of one of the adjoining houses, while in the street a small man was busily engaged in returning the ammunition and swearing comprehensive British oaths.

It was a battle to shun; but the street was narrow, and we had to wait until hostilities ceased or run the gauntlet of the cannonade.

As I cautiously reconnoitred from the door of the gharry the aggressive figure in the street dropped in a crumpled heap, struck by one of the carelessly wandering brick-bats. Notwithstanding his language, I could not leave an Englishman there to be murdered, so quickly hauled him into the vehicle.

The enemy fired upon the ambulance; they were savages. An eighth-of-a-brick caromed from my shoulder-blade and smashed a blind in the carriage.

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Safely in the gharry the horse, urged by the red hail-stones, fled through the bombardment, and we were soon in a purer atmosphere.

The fresh air revived my war-like friend, who was no more than partially stunned. He announced his recovery by punching me in the chin with a tiny fist.

"Stop that—you little ass," I said.

He stared at me in astonishment. The gharry was dark, but I could feel him stare, for there was a long-drawn pause with no fighting remarks. Although I was not a betting man, athletics were rather in my line, so it was not worth while getting angry with the feather-weight in front of me. I could hear him swearing softly to himself, and I was being characterized as a rum chap.

Then he assured me confidentially that he was under seven stun; he added that his name was Griffith—"Griff, you know," and drove emphatically at my eye lest I forget.

Talking excited him—not a difficult task, and he commenced prowling around over my feet and knees. When I squeezed him somewhat, making him sit down, he waxed somewhat; for he was Griffith, who had been with Lord Dick for three years, and it irked him to be sat on by a butcher of a cross-country rider.

Evidently his imagination had been contami-

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nated by sporting companions, and he took me for a steeplechase jockey.

Having rescued him had given him a sort of claim upon my attention, but I still felt a desire to get rid of him as speedily as I might. His encounter with the brick-bat and some previous whiskey had rather muddled him as to localities; it seemed impossible to pin him down to any house or street of which he knew anything. I groaned inwardly; I should have to take him to my own quarters.

"You're no good at the game," he said to me, groggily.

"Where do you live?" I asked. This seemed to me the more important question.

"Where do I live? I live with the Count—sleep with him." Evidently the brick-bat had affected his mind.

"Count who?" I asked.

"Count who? Count your grandmother! What are you givin' us? Who do you s'pose he's—hic—the Count of Calcutta?"

I admitted I had not formed any opinion on the matter.

"I am on to the Count, hic. My Count. See? an'—an'—he'll win, too," he hiccoughed.

That did not convey much information. The Count might be of any nationality—a winner at a

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pigeon shoot, a game of tennis or a law suit. My salvage was voluble, but I gleaned little from the mass of profanity he poured out. It seemed most likely that the Count was a patron of the ring, and my young friend a clever boxer in his service.

"Where does the Count hail from?" I asked, thinking if I could identify that nobleman I might take the boy home.

"From Australia, of course. Where do all the good uns come from? He's own son to Lord Harry; got by the Devil, *he was*."

Surely was the servant worthy of the master, I thought; also was the pedigree correct, no doubt. I took a look out of the window. We were going right now I knew, for I recognized the streets.

"So the Count's a good master, is he?" I said, thinking to humor my highly connected companion.

"Bet your life he doesn't master *me*," he answered; "he bosses the rest of 'em, but when I give him a lift in the ribs he knows what time o' day it is."

"I shouldn't wonder," I added, as I thought of the crack on the jaw he had given me.

"He's a dandy, though; when he's out to win you can bet your life on him."

"Win what?" I asked.

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"Anything he's in for, short or long; it's all the same to him if he's out for the stuff. The guys'll be playin' Sir Michael next week; but if you see the Count with his shoes off, an' me there, you can stake your life he'll get all there is in sight."

"Is this—ah—Sir Michael a—a friend of the Count's?"

"Bet yer life; they're half-brothers."

No doubt it was quite simple—to him, but to me it was very perplexing. Why the Count should play with his shoes off, whatever it was they were going to play; and what his half-brother, the Baronet, had to do with it all, was more than I could understand. However, according to my young friend, that would give him the advantage, so that he would beat Sir Michael easily.

Perhaps the Count also boxed, and it might be that he was going to have a set-to with Sir Michael, and the young gamecock with me was his trainer. Ah! that seemed a likely solution. Obviously with his shoes off the Count would be spryer on his feet, and yet——

"But doesn't the Count ever hurt his feet going without his shoes that way?" I asked, by way of keeping my friend awake.

"That's just it," he mused, aroused to fresh interest by my query, and lurching forward so that his nose rubbed with soft persuasion up and down

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my shirt front. Then he broke off suddenly to damn me for a while, also for an ass, for his nose had rasped against a shirt stud, cutting a gash diagonally across the tip. "That's just it," he continued, when he had exhausted his vocabulary of unpleasant words, and got back to the question again. "That's just *why* his shoes come off when he's out for the dust. He's a trifle tender on his pins, an' you won't see him without his shoes more'n once or twice in the season. But when you do—look out! My word!"

"He must be plucky," I suggested, thinking of a barefooted aristocrat wading through Calcutta dust.

"There never was a gamer one," he answered, laconically.

Just then the gharry stopped; the driver's head appeared at the door. "The Sahib's house has arrived," he said in the beautifully decorative language of the East. "Ghar men hai." Ah! that was the word I had been trying to think of, *Ghar men* (house) when the Devil-god had whispered in my ear "jahannam."

It was only by the promise of refreshment that I succeeded in getting my charge out of the gharry. He was bound to go home to sleep with the Count; but as he didn't seem to have the faintest idea where the Count lived, it was quite possible he

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would turn up again among people who had stoned him from the tops of houses.

"You see," he explained, "they may get at the Count if I'm not there. I've got to look after him. There's no one he'll allow 'round him 'cept me. I'm not takin' any chances."

That being so I wondered why he had been wasting his time firing bricks at people who were so much higher up in the world; but I refrained from saying anything, and contented myself with hauling him up to my quarters by the back of the collar. That was the quickest way, and I was sleepy.

When we came into the light I saw he had a nasty gash across the top of his head; but examination disclosed that his small head was as neatly mapped as a German student's; it was part of his business; and probably came from his habit of lifting people in the ribs, as he did with the Count.

He would have talked all night, but a strong "peg" bowled him over and put him to sleep.

In the morning, and sober, he was quite different; as silent and shamefaced as a sweeper. He seemed to fully appreciate my kindness in looking after him. "It was very good of you, sir," he said, "to put yourself out about me; and I suppose I talked like a drunken idiot."

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"Well you talked a good deal about the Count——"

"Sh-h-h," he interrupted, "please don't say a word about it, sir—don't mention the name; only"—and he looked at me thoughtfully—"don't *forget* what I said about him, and don't never mention the name to nobody. But if at any time, sir, you want to know anything, or if I can help you, don't be backward in askin' me. The Count'll do more for me than he will for any other—man or boy. And now good-morning, and thank you, sir," and he was gone.

"Deuced funny chap," I thought; "but I expect he'll catch it from the Count, whoever he is, when he gets home. I expect the lift in the ribs will be the other way about."

That I knew nothing about betting and horse-racing, which are one and the same thing in India, was more than made up by Steel; in fact, he was a sort of perambulating turf guide. He was always at me to go down to the Calcutta Meet to see this kingly sport.

A week after my experience in the gharry the big Calcutta race meeting took place. Steel was importunate that I should go with him; reluctantly I consented. In reality, of course, I had nothing to do with it; it was The Thing which drew me to the chance.

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I noticed that Steel worked wondrous hard for a man who was simply out for amusement. Back and forth from the horse paddock to the little inclosure, where vociferous chaps were shouting all sorts of unintelligible exclamations, he raced; and just as each race was being run he would tear over to where I was sitting quietly in the stand and watch the horses through his glasses.

On one of these excursions he said to me: "I've been losing, but I'll get it all back on Sir Michael. He's the straight tip for the next race; I've had it from the owner."

"Sir Michael!" I gasped, as The Thing whispered in my ear about the mad gharry ride.

"Yes, Sir Michael," he replied. "You don't know anything about him, do you?"

"Sir Michael is a horse, then?" I asked.

"Why, certainly; did you think he was a bullock, and this a race for native stock?"

I paid no attention to his facetious remark, it was only Steel's way; but a nebulous something was trying to stir the leaven of more connected thought in my mind.

"Do you know anything of a Count something?" I queried. "He's from Australia, I think. Does he own this—ah—Sir Michael horse?"

Steel looked at me queerly for a minute. He satisfied himself that I was not sitting in the sun,

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but his face took on a troubled, anxious expression. That I should be talking about the horses was in itself surprising; that I should so hopelessly jumble noblemen and horses together was, no doubt, a matter for anxiety.

"A man named Marston owns Sir Michael," Steel said deliberately, and with a soothing intonation in his voice; "wait a bit—I've got it; there's another horse from the same stable called 'The Count'; that's what you've got in your mind. I was really afraid it was a touch of the sun, for you've not been liquoring up."

"Who owns the Count?" I queried. "Is it a man named Griffith?"

"By Jove!" exclaimed Steel; "you *are* mixed; Griffith's a jock, and wouldn't be allowed to race or own horses. I'll tell you who owns him," he added, looking at his race card; "Macklin—that's the man. He's trained in the same stable with Sir Michael."

"Let's go and have a look at the horses," I said, moving down from the steps.

Steel's eyes opened wide with astonishment. "You're coming on nicely," he remarked; "you'll wind up by having a bet on Sir Michael yourself."

"No, I sha'n't do that; and you had better wait till I find out about something."

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"I suppose you're going to ask the jockey," he sneered banteringly.

"Yes," I answered simply, "if I get a chance."

"If you make that mistake, old man, he will probably tell you to go to——"

"Jahannam," I put in.

"That's just what he'll do," said Steel, with a grin at my Hindustani.

We walked over to the paddock. Gentlemen and ladies were sauntering around among the high-tempered horses, who were waiting, all on edge, for the struggle that lay before them.

"This way, please," whispered The Thing in my ear. Straight, like a sleep-walker, I followed the whisper to where a great, white-stockinged chestnut was stretching his long, lean neck impatiently, and making nervous music with the snaffle in his teeth.

I knew I should see the little man of brick-bat proclivities beside the Count. He was there in all the splendor of Oxford blue jacket and deep crimson sash.

"Who is that little man in blue and crimson?" I asked Steel. I knew, for The Thing had whispered in my ear "That's Griffith," but I wanted a human voice to assure me that I was not dreaming.

"That's Griffith, the jockey, 'Little Griff,' as

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they call him—one of the best boys that ever came out from Australia. He's the Fred Archer of India. Wonder what he's riding," and he looked at his card again. "By Jove! The Count! Wonder what he's doing up on that crock—to make the running for his stable companion, Sir Michael, I suppose."

"I'll ask him," I said.

Steel put a detaining hand on my arm, and his blue eyes were full of a new wonder. I went over and spoke to the little man.

"Good-day, sir," he exclaimed, touching his cap, as he looked up at me.

"You remember me, then?" I queried.

"I'd be a sweep if I didn't," he answered.

"Is that the Count?" I asked, carelessly.

"Yes, sir. You can bet your life on him this trip."

The signal to mount came from the judge's stand.

A big red-faced man stepped up and held his hand on a level with the Count's forearm; the jockey put his foot in it, and was lifted into the saddle.

I walked back to Steel. "That horse is going to win," I assured him; "but there is one thing I don't quite understand—the jockey once told me that if I saw the Count with his 'shoes off' he was certain to win."

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Steel looked at the horse as I spoke, and exclaimed: "Don't you see, they *have* taken his shoes off—he's as barefooted as a colt. 'A pound off his feet is four pounds off his back,' the saying is, and that horse is out for the guineas to-day."

Then I told him what I knew.

"We'll have to hurry if we mean to back him," he said. "The odds will soon be cut when the owner's money comes into the ring."

We made a pilgrimage over to the bookmakers. Sir Michael was a strong favorite; the Count was 40 to 1.

"How much do you wish to bet?" my companion asked.

"I'm going to make the only bet of my life just now," I answered. "I can afford to lose 500 rupees if the horse doesn't win. If it comes off—well and good."

Steel got the money on; judicious investments here and there among the different bookmakers in moderate sums made it possible. He was an artist at that sort of thing. He also backed the horse for himself.

I was sitting in the stand when Steel came over, having finished his financial transactions. "The owner's money is going on now," he said, "and the odds are being cut. I shouldn't wonder if the brute would win."

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"Win, win, win!" The Thing kept jingling in my ear, or perhaps it was only the echo of my friend's voice, or perhaps it was the crazy unnerving excitement of my first bet.

Almost as he had looked in the street the night of the riot, appeared Little Griff, crouched monkey-like over the withers of the big chestnut at the post. It was only three-quarters of a mile, the race, and in less than two minutes I should be rich—rich for a Griffin, or full of the knowledge that a month's salary had been dropped in the sea.

The white-stockinged legs of the chestnut flicked in and out among the dark shins of the other horses as they cotilloned in and out in their fight for the premier place when the bunting should drop.

Several times the kaleidoscope of colors lined up, and shot forward as the first flag kissed the earth. Each time the white legs twinkled in front; each time the scarlet-slashed blue drove out in the lead of the other colors.

"Good boy, Griff!" Steel was saying, as he watched them through his glass. "You'll buy the watch for him, Kinnaird, if he wins, and I'll furnish the chain—I'll throw in a charm, too."

Steel was getting excited, evidently. I was also worked up, but I kept it out of evidence.

"There they go!" my friend cried. "The

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Count's in the lead. Good old Griff! he's got a head on his shoulders, that boy has."

I could see that the big chestnut had opened up a flattering lead of at least two lengths.

"They'll nev-er catch him! they'll nev-er catch him!" Steel was saying in a cheerful monotone. He was excited.

Gracious! what would I do with twenty thousand rupees, I was wondering. What if the bookmakers should go broke and welch me out of the lot? The race seemed already won, with Griffith away in the lead.

"They'll nev-er catch him—nev-er catch him!" Steel kept on in that isolated drawl. "They'll nev-er catch him—the Count's light—seven stun two; and he's got the foot of all of them, for he's fast as greased lightning. They'll nev-er catch him!"

It was a cheerful bulletin, in spite of the monotony of the expression. It not only announced that our horse was in premier place, but it was optimistic of the future. I prayed that Steel might not be a dishonored prophet; also that the bookmakers might not welch me.

I took out the tickets and looked at them; there might have been some mistake made in the horse. They were all right; the various sums in the lined margin all stood against the name "Count." I

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shoved them back in my pocket, and listened to my friend. "He's choking them off in the heavy going. They'll nev-er catch him!"

They had swung into the stretch now. To my unpractised eye they were all winning; each horse seemed galloping as fast as the other—there were a dozen of them, and how could Steel be so cocksure about the Count?

"He's never moved in the saddle yet, and the others are all hard at work."

My heart sank. Was our jockey not trying to win?

"Good boy! They'll never catch him!" It was evidently all right again, though I couldn't quite understand it. But I could see the white legs flashing in the bright sunlight quite in the front, so our horse must be doing well.

A hundred yards from the finish I saw Sir Michael pull up to the girths of the chestnut. The suspense of the moment choked my friend's voice—he was silent. I felt that the struggle had come.

"You win, win, win!" The Thing was dinging in my ear.

Then the arm that had so cheerfully punched me in the chin shot into the air once, twice, and, as it descended each time, there was a noise like the crack of a pistol. The white legs seemed to

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flash quicker; the chestnut mass with the long bony neck drew steadily out from the jumble of bays and grays, and I could hear a thousand voices roaring: "The Count! The Count! The Count wins!"

Steel turned, screwed up his glasses, put them nervously into their leather case, and said: "I knew they'd never catch him. You've won a small fortune. We'll throw in a diamond pin with the watch."

"Bli' me!" said Griffith, when I spoke to him about the final struggle; "I only hit my bootleg. I wouldn't touch the Count with the whip, nohow. We're chums; I sleep in his stall."

The bookies didn't welch me—they never do in India.



THE BALLYGUNGE CUP

The Ballygunge Cup

A TRUE woman, a strong man, and a good horse; love, strength, and speed. Because of these things, a story.

But it did not start this way—not by a great deal. At first it was only banter. That was the way Beth looked at it—Beth Cavendish. If Douglas Slade were more in earnest, that was his fault.

He was in indigo, up in Tirhoot, and the planter's life tends to make one take things more seriously than they do in the service. For Beth was of the army. Her father, who was a general, and her brother, and all the rest of the Cavendishes, were of the army. And there its strength, and speed, and truth, and just a little of love, perhaps.

She admired Slade in a sisterly sort of way. He was like her brothers; quite good enough for the service—should have been there, in fact, not messing about in the poisonous indigo, having to drink a little gin every day to keep the poison out of his blood, as they all did.

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As for the seriousness of the thing, as I have said, it was all on his side. That was the atmosphere when they said these things. It was in Calcutta.

He had really been skirmishing for an opening—so blunderingly, that she knew it.

"Marriage and the before is not romance," she said, looking very earnestly through the window and out across the sun-scorched *maidan* that stretched away to the stone feet of Fort William. "It's dreadfully commonplace—it's almost tragic in its dull commercialness."

"Is there no romance in love, then?" he said, feeling that some strong moves were being made on the chess-board of their little game.

"I suppose there is, of 'love,' but we don't associate love with most of the marriages we see, you know; they are *arranged*, and the result is——"

He waited for her to finish the sentence, watching the gray eyes as they came back, drooping a little from the glare of the hot sunshine. But she seemed to be picturing the result to herself, and to have forgotten all about his presence, so he added: "Disastrous, eh?"

"Not always, of course. Now if it were the old days, the old times when men rode forth to battle for the ladies they loved, or said they loved, it might be different. Then a man had to dare

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and do much to prove his love. Now it's simply a matter of arrangement."

Slade thought hopelessly of his position. He might vow to raise more indigo than any other man in his district, but that would hardly appeal to this maid of a warlike race. His chances were limited. He would willingly undertake to thrash anybody, but there was nobody to thrash. He felt quite bitterly that what she said was true—there was little of romance in his life, little that was bright to offer her in exchange for the pleasant existence she led.

Why should she go to live at his stupid old bungalow, up in Tirhoot, simply because he desired it—loved her, if you will. She had sadly demolished his skirmishing line; but he must retreat with a light heart—conceal the dull little gnawing with banter.

"Yes," he said, "if we lived in those days, or those days were now, I might take your glove, tie it to my helmet—I really forget how they did fasten the gloves on—and go up and down the land knocking people about until you were quite satisfied with the slaughter, and called me back to receive my reward. By Jove! I'd do it quick enough, though," he added, more to himself than to his companion.

Beth smiled a little at this, and said: "You see,

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the fates are against you—there's no chance for you to show your devotion."

"No, no chance," he admitted, tragically.

"Are you going to win any races in Calcutta next meeting?" she broke in, changing the subject abruptly, as though his last words had settled the other for all time.

"No, I'm afraid I can't even win a race; my horses are all crocks—not one above selling plater form."

A merry light danced in Beth's eyes. Had she laid a trap for him?

"You shall be my knight-errant, then; I'll give you a task. Win the Ballygunge Cup."

His face fell. "Something easy, please," he begged; "the moon, for instance, or Buddha's tooth from Ceylon. Any little bauble you may think of."

"My knight rides not forth to battle to-day, then?" said Beth.

"Oh, I'll try it, of course," he added, flushing a little; "try it, and not a hack in my stable fit to pull a dog-cart. Only don't pluck a fellow if he fails, that's all. But I must have a gage—a modern gage in black and white."

The getting of the gage was too tedious for telling, but it read:

"If Douglas Slade wins the next Ballygunge

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Steeplechase I promise to—" and there she stuck.

He filled in with his own hand "reward him."

"You're to wear it on your casque, you know," she said, as he folded it up neatly.

"Yes, I'll tie it in my racing-cap when I ride forth to battle in the Cup," he said, as he stood, one foot on the step of his high dog-cart, and nodded pleasantly to Beth.

"Now I'm in a hat," said Slade to himself, as he drove to his hotel. "Win the Ballygunge Cup with a lot of broken-down nags, when I have failed before with the best horse that ever came to India. And the Cavendish knew I couldn't win it when she set me the pace."

Then he grabbed a life-line that dangled down into his sea of despair. The life-line was Captain Frank Jocelyn. He was standing at the door of the hotel.

"By Jove!" said Slade; "you're just the man I want, Jocelyn. If there's anybody on earth, or anywhere else, that can help me out of this pickle, you're the man, or fiend, as the case may be."

Up in his room he told Jocelyn what he had undertaken to do. The captain whistled a merry note of derision.

"Do you know what you've run up against?" he asked. "Lord Dick's got Musket, a big win-

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ner at Punchestown, out from home to land this same bit of jewelry; and, bar him, there isn't a horse in the country can beat Jovial, who is in it, too.

"I'd transfer my horse Chang to you quick enough," said Captain Frank, "for I mean to start him; but I'll tell you straight, if either of the other two come to the post fit, I'll only win it if something happens the both of them—if they fall, or run out, or something of that sort. Neither of them is apt to do that, though," he continued, regretfully, "for they're both crackers at the leaping game."

"But I've *got* to win it," cried Slade, helplessly; and the look on his face drew another whistle from the firm thin lips of the racing captain.

Jocelyn sat in deep thought for a minute. "If it's as bad as all that," he said, looking at Slade, "we'll have to hunt up a horse to beat the both of them, eh? You've got nothing in your stable that a dhoby's donkey couldn't give pounds to. But Baldeck's just landed a whaler, in a ship-load of horses from Australia, that if we can buy and get fit in time will take a lot of beating. His name's Gold Finder; he won over Big Timber in Australia."

Hope is a good tonic, and the way Slade rushed things until he had secured Gold Finder was ap-

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palling. Not but what there was trouble over it, and it really seemed as though everybody was in league to keep him from winning the Cup.

Baldeck wanted it himself; in fact, had brought this horse out to win it to take back to Australia.

Gold Finder's price, £500, was all right—Slade gave that eagerly enough; and he got over the difficulty of the Cup for Baldeck by agreeing that if the horse won he would have a duplicate made, in gold if he liked, and give it to him.

This seemed a trifling and happy arrangement; but, like a good many other trifling things, it turned out seriously in the end.

"You'll have to come up with me to my place and get Gold Finder fit," Slade told Jocelyn. "I want to win this race and then quit the turf. I'll have something else to think of then," he added, impressively.

So Jocelyn and his own racing stable were transported up to Tirhoot. There was no difficulty about this, for Captain Frank had shed the army, and was a racing gentleman pure and simple—not so *very* pure and simple, perhaps.

Slade agreed to make him a present of Gold Finder after the race was run and won.

"We'll have a great chance to find out how the new horse is going," Slade said, "with Chang in the string. Chang's almost good enough, and if

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my horse turns out a bit better we'll scorch them this trip."

While Slade and Jocelyn got the two horses ready in Tirhoot, on the indigo planter's estate, something else was being got ready in Calcutta.

That was the working of Maynard's mind over this same Ballygunge Cup. He was in the service, too, but that didn't matter. What did matter was that he thought Beth Cavendish the only girl he wanted to marry.

Now a trick native servants have, is to understand English and pretend they do not. And one of Beth's servants had heard enough of the conversation between Beth and Slade to earn a silver rupee from Maynard. It is not customary for English officers to bribe native servants, but Maynard was not a customary sort of chap—he was Oriental in his ways.

That was why Maynard also prepared something. "I can't get anything to beat him now," he reasoned, "but I can stop him; I can get a horse strong enough to do that trick—strong enough to bring him down."

So while the others worked faithfully in Tirhoot, he trained a sprinter to go fast for a mile, and jump viciously at everything in sight.

Though Maynard's morals were slightly oblique

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his pluck was all right, and he never thought of his own neck in the matter.

If he broke the other fellow's—well, necks sometimes do get broken in a steeplechase over a stiff country.

“I think it's fairly satisfactory,” he confided to himself; “if by any chance I fail to bring him a cropper, Lord Dick is pretty sure to beat him out on Musket.” So he took a pretty heavy bet, backing Lord's Dick's horse to win a small fortune. You see it was all gain with him—love and coin.

A week before they took the horses down to Calcutta for the Meet Slade and Jocelyn had a trial to see how things had been coming on. As trials go it was superb. Slade rode Gold Finder at 11 stone, Jocelyn, Chang at 10 stone 7 lbs., and three other horses were put in to make the running, with an English jockey, Stegg, on the back of the best of them, a horse called Ring. They went over three miles of strongly made country as though they were racing for a hundred Ballygunge Cups.

Gold Finder won handily enough at the finish, and Slade had a nice warm feeling about his heart as he looked at the big chestnut's mighty limbs, clean as a whistle, when he turned him over to his syce after the gallop.

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"It's hall oop, sir, with t'others," said Stegg, "Th' coop 'ill coom Tirhoot w'y this trip."

"If it doesn't," said Jocelyn, "I'll take the shilling and give up racing."

But down Calcutta way people were just as sure that the race lay between Musket and Jovial. Musket was from the land where they bred grand national winners, and Lord Dick was a finished horseman. Nerves of steel and heart of a lion, that was Lord Dick, in the saddle or out.

Why Maynard had put Budmash in, nobody knew. Certainly he couldn't stay the course, three miles and a half, and he was well named Budmash, for he had the temper of a fiend.

It bothered Captain Frank not a little; that a man of Maynard's cleverness should play the fool was quite out of the question; besides, Maynard could surely get something that would go the distance and have some chance of finishing with the others.

Then, when he found out that Budmash's owner had taken a long bet about Musket's winning, he commenced to do considerable thinking — suspicious thinking.

"I'll keep an eye on Maynard in the race," he told Slade. "He played me a bit of a trick once at Umballa, and I shouldn't half mind wiping out the score; Chang's a pretty big horse, and between

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us we can take care of ourselves, and somebody else too if it's needed."

"What do you mean?" asked Slade.

"Nothing! only we'll sort of win the Cup between us. You'll sort of ride under my orders, and when I give you the word in the race do just as I say, even if it does seem a bit queer."

"I'll take your coaching, Frank, for you know the game better than I do," Slade answered.

That was only two days before Cup day. Slade said nothing to Beth about winning the Cup. When he had won it would be soon enough; if he lost—well, he had not lost yet, anyway.

"There'll be some collar-bones cracked to-day," remarked Captain Frank to Slade, as they put on their silk colors in the dressing-room the day of the race; "the top bamboos on all the jumps are iron bound, and if any horse hits them hard he'll come down for keeps, and he'll stay down too."

"Dangerous, that, eh?" grunted Slade, tugging at a tight boot; "might upset our good thing."

"Hardly," said Captain Frank, with his drawling twang. "Somebody'll find them dangerous, but you won't. Gold Finder'll fly them like a bird."

"What about Chang?" inquired Slade.

"Chang and his rider are all right," replied Jocelyn; "they're only out for an airing."

The Ballygunge Cup

The terms of the race were simple enough: It was a gentleman's race, for all horses owned solely by members of the Ballygunge Association, open to all riders.

Here also was a simple arrangement, that turned out very complicated at the end.

Of course Beth was there, everybody who was anybody was. It was the "Grand National" of India.

Beth had not thought that Douglas Slade would take her banter so seriously. Why had he bought a horse that really had a good chance of winning the Cup, for people were saying that he might win? Good judges liked the big chestnut, and were saying that he had a great chance.

Beth kept asking herself a knotty question: "If Douglas Slade won, what then?" He had kept so quiet about it that she thought he had forgotten the whole thing.

Surely he was a valiant knight; 'twould almost be too bad for him to be beaten now. The thought gave her a start. What if he should be beaten?—he had been so plucky about it—so determined.

It was the one thing in the world to warm the warrior blood that coursed through her veins; just what her brothers would have done; gone at it strong and fearlessly, and with a determination to

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win. And it was all for her sake, too; there was no getting over that point.

And Maynard, who also had a horse in the race, had told her that Lord Dick's Musket would certainly win. She hardly knew what her feelings were. If Douglas Slade won, it would lead to complications surely, he was so persistent—if he lost, it would be too bad. It was silly of her to have given him that gage.

And there was the gage, right enough, straight in front of her eyes. Douglas Slade, riding by on his big chestnut from the paddock to the course, turned his head toward the grand stand as he passed the end, and she saw the missive, the gage, tied tightly in the strings of his cap, gleaming white against the dark-blue silk.

Slade caught Beth's eye as he looked at the sea of faces, and she felt a warm flush scorch her cheeks. It vexed her. She did not care for him; it had been only banter.

They were all stringing out for the start—eight of them, eight of the best steeplechase horses in all India. Captain Frank, on the big angular Chang, looked the finished horseman that he was; the easy grace of his seat told of the perfect mastery; it was like my lady in her rocking-chair. And the thin, determined, bony face of the rider; it would be Chang's fault if that pair did not win.

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Win! The captain was not thinking of winning—thinking of something else, thinking of the dark-brown horse just in front of him, Budmash.

Gold Finder held Chang quite safe as far as winning went, he knew; his business was to take care of Budmash, and mayhap his rider, for Captain Frank's suspicion had become a certainty.

A steeplechase of three miles and a half is not a sprint in which the start counts for much, so they were soon away, the silk jackets of the riders snapping and cracking at the wind, like frost breaking from the tightened bark of trees in winter.

Beth had said to herself that she shouldn't care much, shouldn't take much interest in the thing; but when the roar "They're off!" beat up from the enclosure below and went echoing through the stand, she felt that she had three or four hearts in her breast, all beating and hammering away with a suffocating quickness. Still, she did not care—it was the excitement.

Over the first three fences they raced like mad things, not at all like cool-headed riders in a big steeplechase.

"They'll soon crack up at that pace," racing men said; "it's too fast."

Jovial's rider was racing for the lead; and Budmash, blood-red nostrils spread wide, his small, wicked ears laid tight back on his cobra-like neck,

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looked the perfect embodiment of evil as he raced on the leader's quarter. Maynard was pulling at his head; but the very devil was in the horse.

At the third fence Prifton, an outsider, struck the rail heavily, and the bamboo clanged back like a taut bowstring. The fall was so terrific that Prifton and his rider lay as though their backs were broken.

Swinging to the right over this fence, just in time to miss the fallen horse, Musket, Gold Finder, and Chang went in a bunch. Over the "post and rails" and "drop fence" they still kept up the terrible pace, Gold Finder making the heart of Douglas Slade glad as he skimmed them like a deer. "God and my girl," he muttered, quite like a knight of old, as he felt the great springy chestnut rise at each jump with a mighty surge and come down on the other side like a cat.

Beth, too, was muttering something as she watched the dark-blue cap rise in the air, almost disappear, and then go slipping away on the level.

Maynard was pulling Budmash back to the others. Jocelyn saw that, and pushed Chang out a little. "You devil!" he jerked out between his set teeth; "I'll give you 'what for'!"

That was for Maynard.

At the big mud wall Jovial struck his forefeet and sent a cloud of dust in the air. As the others

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swept by they saw Jovial's rider ploughing along on his side, as though he had been shot out of a catapult. But he was not hurt, and in three seconds had the horse going again.

Maynard, with a strong pull at his horse's head, had got him back, until Chang's nose was on his flank. On Chang's quarter raced Gold Finder.

Jocelyn saw Maynard take a look over his shoulder at Slade's mount. "He'll try it on at the 'in and out,' or the big jump," thought Captain Frank.

The "in and out" was two big mud walls about twenty feet apart. As they neared it Jocelyn saw that Maynard was up to mischief. "He'll pull dead across Gold Finder if I don't bring him down," he muttered to himself.

Four strides from the first wall Maynard looked around again. Gold Finder was thundering along just behind Chang, who was still lapped on Budmash's quarter.

Captain Frank saw the look, and the short wraps that Maynard took in the right rein of Budmash's bridle.

"Pull back!" he yelled to Slade, and drove the spurs into Chang's great flanks.

At that instant Maynard pulled Budmash's head short to the right as they lifted at the first wall; with a smashing crack Chang was into him, chest

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on. As the two went into the dip a smashed mass, Gold Finder took off at their very heels, springing slightly to the left, and landed clear of the wreck.

The second wall he cleared also; and he and Musket, a length behind, raced on the level.

A cry of horror went up from the stand as Budmash and Chang toppled over the wall in a broken heap.

Beth closed her eyes and turned white. When she opened them the blue cap was skimming along like a bird.

"Who fell?" she asked, faintly.

"Captain Jocelyn and Maynard are down," her companion replied. "I'm afraid there are backs broken there."

It seemed wicked to feel glad when perhaps someone was lying dead between those barriers, but her heart certainly gave a throb of joy at the answer that told her the owner of the blue cap was still riding—that Slade was not down. She was beginning to forget all about the banter.

Then the race itself began in earnest. Musket and Gold Finder were fighting like gladiators for the Cup their masters coveted so much. At the water jump, eighteen feet broad, they came together; together they flew it.

A roar of applause went up from the straining, eager watchers.

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Half a mile from home Musket's head showed well in front.

"Lord Dick'll win," said Beth's companion. "Musket's an Irish horse, bred to run all day."

Beth's fingers clutched tightly the handle of her parasol, and she set her white lips firm and hard.

And so they came, around the corner and up the stretch and over fences—always the same, the creamy nose of Lord Dick's roan always a trifle in front. As they cleared the last fence Slade seemed to send a thrill of the pent-up energy of his frame into Gold Finder, and the big horse made a last mighty effort.

Surely, slowly, his golden muzzle crept up past the mottled head of the roan; Lord Dick's whip flashed in the air and cut at Musket's quivering flanks. Slade sat perfectly still, crouched low over the withers of his horse, for he knew that Gold Finder knew, and was making his last effort.

There was no sound in the stand, nothing but the strained breathing of the people who waited and the soft rustle of cloth as they passed close to each other in their intense eagerness.

Only the judges knew as they flashed under the wire what had won.

Then the numbers went up, and the mob knew. It was Gold Finder's race.

"Sorry for Lord Dick," said Beth's companion,

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as they sat down; "but the other chap, Slade, deserves it. Never saw a gamer race in my life."

Beth wasn't sorry for anybody. Her nerves were jerking and twitching, and she felt that she never wanted to see another race in her life—not one just like that, anyway.

Two processions came into the stand enclosure almost together. Musket and Gold Finder formed one, while the other consisted of two stretchers, carrying Jocelyn and Maynard.

"A twisted ankle and a cracked rib is no price to pay for a victory like that," Captain Frank assured Slade; "besides, I wiped that Umballa score out."

Maynard was badly smashed up too; collar-bone broken and a badly wrenched shoulder, but not beyond the working of more mischief.

After the race Slade met Beth face to face on the lawn. She held out her hand in a pleased way.

"Are you glad I won?" he asked, awkwardly. "Did you win gloves or anything over my mount?"

"I hardly know yet what I won," she replied, enigmatically. "You see, I can't quite remember what my bets were till people come to pay up."

"I don't know what I've won, either," thought Slade, as Beth's companion carried her off. "But I'll find out to-morrow."

That night Slade was having the fruits of vic-

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tory thrust upon him. He was in a very heaven of pleasant conquest.

They were having a little victory dinner, he and some friends, and in the middle of it a servant brought in a letter for Slade.

The letter was from Jocelyn; it was characteristic and much to the point. Somebody, who was the undoubted brother of the devil, had entered a protest against Gold Finder, on the score that he was not the sole property of Mr. Slade. The Stewards, whose brains were as weak as stewed tea-leaves, had decided to hold the Cup back. Gold Finder had undoubtedly won the race itself, and stakes and bets would go to his owner and backers; but the Cup would not be handed over until Slade proved that he had complied with the regulations.

There would be a meeting of the Stewards next morning at ten o'clock, when he would have a chance to prove his case.

All that Jocelyn wrote, and more too, but the "more too" was chiefly ornamental, and reflected upon the character of the Stewards and everybody associated with the objection.

Slade was sure there was no case against him, but somehow he felt as though Beth were slipping away.

Next day, at the Stewards' meeting, he indig-

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nantly denied that anybody but himself had any interest in Gold Finder.

Then he was confronted with something he had completely forgotten—his promise to Baldeck.

One of the Stewards said: "An objection has been lodged on the score that Mr. Baldeck is still interested in Gold Finder to the extent that you promised him the Cup, or a duplicate of it, in the event of his winning. If you assure the Stewards this is not so, there is no evidence other than his word, and we shall be forced to overrule the objection.

"If you admit it, it establishes the fact that Mr. Baldeck still has an interest in the horse, and that you are not the sole owner. In that event the Cup will go to Musket, who finished second."

It was a bitter pill, losing the prize, and on a technicality, too, but Slade never hesitated for an instant. His word would be taken against the other man's, but that didn't matter.

"I promised Mr. Baldeck the Cup," he said, gravely. "I didn't know that it constituted an interest in the horse."

That afternoon he went to hand Beth the gage back, not as he thought he should have gone, to demand fulfilment of the promise, given in banter though it was, but to admit that he had failed.

It was rather odd that Beth had heard all the

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facts of the case before Slade got there, but she had. Whether Captain Frank was able to get about in a gharry or not I don't know, but Beth knew.

"I have brought back your gage," said Slade, trying to speak in the same bantering tone they had used that other time. "I failed to get you the Cup."

Beth smiled a little as she reached out for the creased slip of paper Douglas handed her. "She doesn't care a rap," he thought; "she is laughing at me."

Deliberately Beth opened the dust-stained note, and read it with provoking coolness.

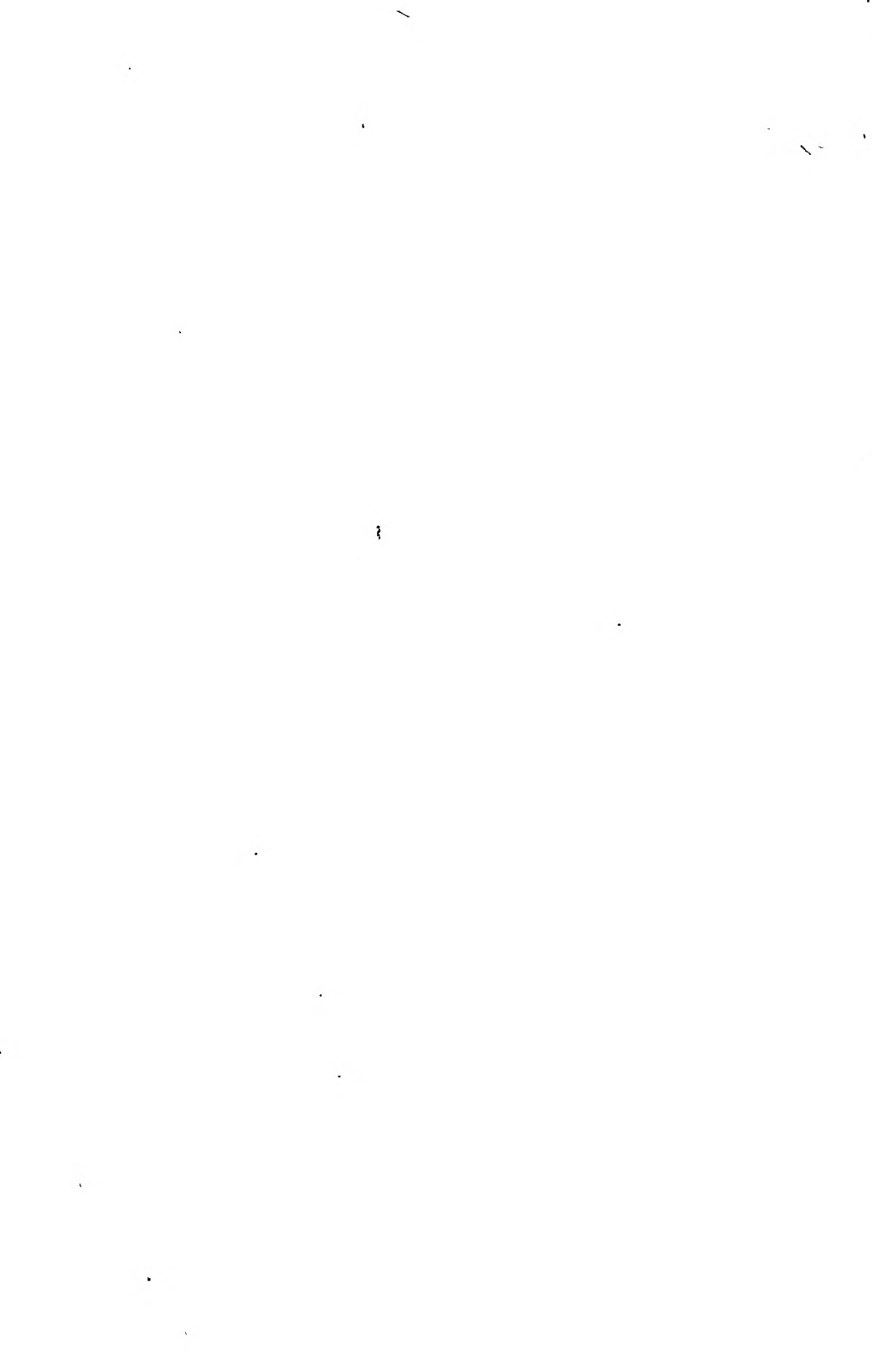
"This doesn't say a word about the Ballygunge Cup," she said, arching her eyebrows.

"Doesn't what?" he broke in, perplexedly.

"It says—wait, I'll read it to you—'If Douglas Slade wins the next Ballygunge *steeplechase*, I promise to—' " then she broke off, as she had in writing the note, and, looking up at him inquiringly, asked, "And you did win the *steeplechase*, didn't you—though you are not to get the Cup?"

And so it really did not matter very much about the Cup after all, though they would have liked it in their drawing-room.

DIPLOMAT'S SACRIFICE



Diplomat's Sacrifice

I AM "Jim," a cab horse. In the stables I am known as No. 17.

It seems queer, this London world, with its cockney slang—queer to me, for I was born in Australia twelve years ago. Bli' me!—there, you see, that's larrikin; it will out—but it was different out *there*.

I was a prince, had royal blood in my veins; but still I didn't learn to write or anything till I came to London and got into the night school for cab horses. That's why I never told this story before.

I was two years old when Trainer Southall came down from Calcutta and bought me, and three other colts that could gallop a bit, from White; bought me to race in India. It was after I had made a big name in Calcutta—I was named Diplomat there—that they sent me to England. But I never did much good here, and one day I was sold to the man who put me between the shafts of a hansom.

Southall had been in the stables since he was a

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little boy, and knew all about us. He said I had sloping shoulders, was short-coupled in the back, long underneath, and well let down in the hocks, had great quarters, a thin, bony head, and ears like silk. I didn't understand it all then, for I was only a colt, and had spent more time in the paddock than in the stable; but I knew he was praising me, and when he put his hand under my chin, and leaned his head against mine, I patted his cheek with my nose.

He laughed, and swore he'd have me if I cost him a thousand guineas. He stuck his thumb under my upper lip, and, looking at my teeth, said, "Bless us! he's only a babe; but he's a whoppin' big 'un—nearly sixteen hands."

Well, he took me away to Calcutta. The trip on the boat was horrible—I don't want to talk about it. I hope no children of mine ever have to go through that; but they won't, for they are all in India now.

In India they kept me till I was four years old before I was started in a race. Of course I galloped with the other horses that were in the stable.

Southall used to do all sorts of funny things with me. When he knew people would be looking at these stable gallops, he put a heavy saddle with two stuns of lead in it on my back, so that I could not beat the other horses.

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The people said I was no good; but Southall would laugh, and tickle me in the ribs, and say, "You're no good, my big buck; you're no good, d'ye hear? But my word, you'll win the Viceroy's Cup in a walk."

The first race I ran was down at Hyderabad. It was the Nizam's Cup; and Southall, and my owner, and little Abbot banked their money on my chances in a way that made me nervous. How they knew I could beat Table Top I don't understand—but I did.

Such an uproar there was. I heard Southall tell the jockey, "Jim," to get away in the lead; so that every time the other horses started, I jumped as quick as I could. After we had gone a half-mile Jim pulled me back and kept me behind Table Top until near the finish. When he let go of my head I shot past the other horse as though he were walking.

They threw a big blanket over me when they took the light saddle off my back after the race. Then I was led down to the stall and scraped with a steel band, and rubbed with straw until I was dry.

My word! but they made a lot of me. The ladies patted my neck, and the trainer said he wished I could drink a bottle of champagne with him. That was the way with those boys; when

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they won they drank champagne and played poker all night, and bullied everybody as though they were kings.

It was five weeks between the Hyderabad races and the Viceroy's Cup, and I heard my master tell the trainer that I should not be started again before that race.

Going down to Calcutta, I caught cold in the train. Southall put a big felt pad on my chest when he put me in the box car, and I got very hot and wet from the perspiration. As I was moving a little the pad caught in a nail and was pulled to one side. I could not put it back; the night air struck cold on my wet skin, and in the morning I was coughing.

When Southall saw me he cried. "My poor boy!" he said; "here's the greatest certainty in the world gone wrong."

My owner and all of them had bet a small fortune on me for the Viceroy's Cup, and they were more solicitous about my health than if I had been the only son in my master's family.

My master had a daughter, Miss Jess. I liked her better than anybody, better even than Southall. Before I was in what they called "hard training" she used to bring me lumps of sugar, little pieces of salt, and sometimes a carrot. She was always scratching my ear, or rubbing my nose with her

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little hand, or doing something to show that we were friends.

"You are a gentleman, Diplomat," she would say, and would pull my mustache or pinch my arm.

After I got back to Calcutta from Hyderabad she came to the stable one morning, and took my breath away by saying: "My poor boy, you're sick; I'm sorry. It's a shame; they were careless—somebody was. But I don't feel as badly as I ought to over it, Dip, for I want another horse to win the Cup; but you don't know anything about that," she added, flicking at my nose with the feathery end of a carrot top.

Then she dragged my head to one side and laid her cheek against mine. I felt something wet trickle down my nose, and when she lifted her sweet face I saw that her eyes were blurred. I couldn't understand it at all; but I had horse sense enough to know that she was sorry for me. Besides, I had heard Southall say that nobody could understand a woman's way.

My cold got better; but the fever went down my legs. After a gallop on the hard, dry race-track my limbs would swell up, and I would go quite lame. The *putties* (bandages) they put on me did some good, but the tendons would swell and get sore. Southall was in despair. He played the hose on my shins after each gallop, and rubbed

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at them until he nearly took the skin off. But still the legs kept weak.

About this time I learned why Miss Jess didn't want me to win the Viceroy's Cup.

One morning, after a gallop on the course, I was waiting for the string to go home when I saw a horse I had known in Australia. He was in the stall next mine. It was Sting. We had been in the same paddock over there.

"What are you running in?" I asked him. "I didn't know you were in the country."

"The Trials and the Viceroy's Cup," he responded.

One of the other fellows entered in the Viceroy's Cup, Robin Hood, was on my right, and when Sting said this, Robin, who was seventeen hands high, gave a snort, and exclaimed, "What! a little sawed-off runt like you expect to beat all the long legs over a mile-and-a-quarter? My word! but you *have* got a fair-sized gall."

"No," answered Sting; "I don't expect to win, but my master, Captain Thornton, thinks I can."

"Well, you *can't*!" snapped Robin. "Diplomat here will give you a stun over that distance."

"Don't mind him," I said, speaking to the little horse. "Tell me what is the matter."

First Water had been travelling about in a circle in front of the stalls, led by a syce. The latter

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stopped to talk to the boy, who was putting the putties on my legs, and the big chestnut heard Robin Hood sneer at little Sting.

"You big lob, you! why don't you leave the little man alone? You're seventeen hands high, and your thigh is as big as my neck, but you never won a race in your life—not since you came to India, anyway. Everybody knows what's the matter with you, too. You're fast enough, but when any of us squeeze you, you just quit. You funk it, and my trainer says he wouldn't have you as a gift—your heart's in the wrong place, he says."

This made Robin furious, for he was a bad-tempered brute, and he lashed out a vicious kick at First Water.

"What did Sting do in the Cau'field Cup, at home in Australia?" continued First Water. "Didn't we all pocket the little chap, and keep him there for a mile—and then, when we rounded the corner for home, he got through and made hacks of us, winning by as far as he pleased? Don't mind that big soft mushroom, Sting. We're glad to see you out from Australia. Did Teddy Weeks bring you over? You'll find the ground hard and dry here, and the heat'll crack your hoofs and burn your liver. My hoof is split so that I have got to wear a big all-round shoe on it."

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Then the syce led First Water away, and a stable boy came to take Robin Hood for a spin.

When we were alone Sting commenced to talk.

"You were only a youngster when you left Australia, Dip," he said; "how have you gone on? I heard my master, the captain, telling people that you were favorite for the Viceroy's Cup, and that you were the only horse he was afraid of. And look here, Dip, I'll tell you a secret, for you'll not give it away, will you? The captain's awfully fond of your master's daughter, Miss Jess—I've seen them together and I've heard them talk. I've heard a lot of things; they think I don't understand, and the syce only knows the pagan language they have got here, so they talk.

"Last night the captain said to me: 'You've got to win the Cup, old man, for if you don't I'll make a mess of it. Besides, you'd like to have Jess for a mistress, wouldn't you?' And one morning your mistress, Miss Jess, came to me on the course, and, rubbing her soft little hand down my neck, said: 'You must be a brave little horse, and win the Cup for your master.' Dull spurs! but I laughed out at this—it was too funny. For my master, to be sure!—there I was to run and win, not the Cup alone, but a small fortune in bets, so that the captain could have your mistress, Dip. Do you see now what is bothering me?"

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I nodded slowly, for this had set me thinking. This was why Miss Jess had been unable to fret more over my illness.

"Well, you'll just have to win," I said to him. "You won three times in Australia, and ought to be good enough to beat these other fellows who should be running as qualified hunters. I'm sure I hope you do, for if my mistress will be happy through your winning that will please me."

"Yes, I won the Cau'field, Dip, but the getting through the crowd was just a little too much for me. When I gallop more than a mile now I get a pain in my side."

"That's what Robin Hood says," I ejaculated. "He says he gets a pain in his side; but we all laugh at him, and think it's because he's soft and cuts it."

"No, Dip, it's not that. You'll find his heart has been strained once, same as mine—has had to do too much. By Saint Gladiateur! when you're galloping there—the other fellows knocking you about, shoving you against the rail, and carrying you wide on the outside of the turns, or closing in on you in a pocket, and the dust is that thick you're breathing mud instead of pure air, so that the pipes leading to your lungs are all choked up, and a boy on your back, who doesn't know anything but to try and get in front, sticks the sharp

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steel into your flank, or hits you with a rawhide whip, what's a fellow to do? It's awful! but if a fellow's got any blood in him, any of the king's blood, he's got to make another try—just a wee bit more. That's what I did at Cau'field, and I got through, but something snapped. Everybody was saying that I'd won easy; but I didn't. I had an awful pain, but I just managed to stay in front, for the others were dead beat, too. That's why I get a pain when I gallop more than a mile. That's why my owner in Australia sold me. He said I'd turned lazy; but he didn't tell Captain Thornton. And now my master and your mistress are risking all their happiness on my winning the Cup."

I shuddered at this, for it was all new to me. The only race I had started in was the Nizam's Cup, and my jockey had used neither whip nor spur; had just kept me back a little with the bit, for I wanted to show them all how fast I could run; I liked it.

"I wish I could tell my master," sighed Sting. "He thinks I'm all right. A vet looked at me when I landed, and said I was sound as a bell. These men are such fools—sometimes."

Just then Sting's trainer came and ordered the syce to bring him out; the jockey, Archie, got up on his back, and they went on the course for a gallop.

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"Who's that fellow?" said a big bay horse, Table Top, as we stood for a few minutes close together in the paddock.

"That's little Sting," I replied.

"Oh, I know," he answered; "Son of Grandmaster. Grandmaster was always blowing about his father, Gladiateur, who won the English Derby. He was a Frenchman, was Gladiateur, and that's why they boasted so much. We'll see what the breed can do out in this blazing hot climate."

It seemed to me they all had a pick on Sting because he was small, and my heart warmed towards the little fellow. As the days wore on I began to have doubts about being able to win myself. My legs got so bad that I had to give up galloping on the hard course. They gave me frightful long walks, and swam me for hours in a big pond to keep my muscles hard. This eased my legs, but it took away my appetite, and I always left part of the oats in the feed-box.

This made the trainer pull a long face; but he was so kind. He gave me raw eggs, and sorted the hay all over, picking out the best for me. He was a dear chap.

My owner was a pompous man, and when he came to the stables everybody jumped about as though they were going to lose their heads.

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One day Southall said to him, "The horse is losing flesh, sir; he won't eat, and I'm afraid he'll break down before the race."

My master flew into a rage, and cursed everybody. He swore that somebody must have drugged me. Miss Jess was with him, and she broke in with, "Why, papa, nobody would do that; besides, Dip knows as much as a man—he wouldn't eat it. Why don't you do with him as the doctors did with me when I was run down, give him stout or something to drink."

Everybody laughed at this, even the father, who was so angry; but the trainer said, "My word, sir, that's a good idea; let me try it."

They had to do something, so the master consented, for he knew that trainers often gave whisky to horses who were a bit soft, when they were going to run a hard race. After that I had three quart bottles of beer twice a day. It was a funny way to train a horse, the knowing ones said—swim him, and feed him on beer; but I felt better.

We were a sorry lot, the whole of us. Sting had a weak heart; so had Robin Hood, as I could see now; First Water had a split hoof, liable to go at any minute; Table Top was so big and lazy they couldn't get him down to condition; Jack-in-the-Green had a splint; and I fancy all of the others had something the matter.

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I kept thinking it over, and one day when I was out for a walk I met Sting coming home from the course. "Look here, little man," I said, "I'd like to see you win that Cup on account of my mistress."

"I can't beat you," answered the chestnut; "you're young, and fast, and sound."

"I'm not sound," I added; "but I think I can beat all the others. Do you think you are fast enough to do them up?" I asked him.

"Yes," he answered, simply; "if this pain doesn't choke me off I can beat them all, because I did it in Australia."

Then I did an awful thing, gentlemen; I turned traitor to my master. Even as I write it, it seems there is no excuse. But now I am only a cab horse in London and have no reputation to keep up, so it doesn't matter.

To Sting I said: "In the race, dash to the front with me just as we turn into the straight. I'll keep a place ready for you next the rail on the inside. As we turn the corner I'll bore out wide and close the others off. You rush up in my place and win. If you *can't* win, I *will*; for I have speed enough to gallop over these cart-horses. I'll teach those big lubbers not to despise a horse just because he's small.

"That won't be right," suggested Sting; but I

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could see him prick his small, silken ears eagerly, and his big eyes glistened with delight. I gulped down something at this, for I had never done anything mean before, and answered:

"I know it's not right, but my mistress will be happy if you win."

"Well," said Sting, "I suppose we have a right to arrange races among ourselves sometimes as well as the men have. Only the other day I heard a conversation between some of your people and the Nawab of Ballygunge. They advised him to buy me if I won the Trial Stakes. This race, you know, is a few days before the Viceroy's Cup. Then they talked among themselves, and I know that if they buy me I am to be run so as to allow you to win, for they've got a pile of money on you. But all the same I wouldn't do this if it wasn't for your mistress; for man's code of morals wouldn't do for us horses—it's not good enough."

Thinking over what I was going to do made me morose; I couldn't bear to rub the trainer's cheek with my nose any more. He said the beer was giving me a vicious temper, making me sullen, and that as soon as the race was over he'd make me take the pledge—he'd shut off my beer.

I knew they'd be furious with me if Sting won—all but Miss Jess.

Well, Sting won the Trials quite handily, and

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the Nawab of Ballygunge tried to buy him, but his owner refused point blank. He swore he'd stick to the little horse if it broke him. Sting told me about this conversation, for he'd heard it; we both admired the captain's pluck, and it made us a little easier in our minds over doing him a good turn.

The only man I felt really sorry for was the trainer, Southall. If I could only have told him to back Sting. I tried every way I could think of. I pretended to be very lame, and refused to take even the beer, thinking that he would become frightened and hedge on Sting. But he put the liquor in a strong soda-water bottle, and, opening my mouth, held my head high and poured it down my throat. I was forced to swallow it; so that failed. He got mad and said, "Damn you! you don't want to win, I believe." Wasn't it odd?

Then came the day of the Viceroy's Cup. Well I remember it; it was the day after Christmas, the 26th December. Early in the morning Miss Jess came to see me, riding on a black-legged bay Arab horse.

"Well, Dip," she said, flicking a fly off my rump with her riding whip, "I wish I could bribe you to let Sting win. Father doesn't need all the money he's going to land; but you're such an honest old chap I'm afraid you wouldn't lose the race even for me."

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Then she slipped into my mouth a little square of white sugar she had hidden in the palm of her glove. I had to laugh at the syce; he saw the Missie Baba fumbling for the piece of sugar, and turned his head discreetly away, pretending to be looking for my brush. Everybody let Miss Jess have her own way it seemed.

"That is a bribe," I said to myself, "to lose the Viceroy's Cup for a lump of sugar," and I made up my mind to take all the whip and spur Jockey Jim could give me, rather than show a nose in front of the captain's horse at the finish.

My! there was a crowd of people at the races. It was like Melbourne Cup day on a small scale. I had a host of friends, for I was the favorite. The story of the beer and the swimming had got out, however, and a great many had backed Sting to win, especially since the Trial Stakes.

As we walked around in a circle in the paddock before going out for the race, I manœuvred to get close behind Sting to speak to him.

"Don't forget," I said, "at the turn into the straight, just before we leave the old race stand, I'll be in the lead on the inside—come through next the rails; I'll pull out and carry them all wide."

The little horse switched his long bronze tail

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caressingly across my neck, and looked gratefully at me over his shoulder.

"How did you feel after the trials?" I asked.

"I had a pain in my side," he answered, laconically; "but I don't feel it now."

Plucky little chap, I thought. They say his grandfather, Gladiateur, was just like that, brave as a lion.

Then a cornet sounded the signal for the jockeys to mount. Archie swung up on to Sting's broad back, and Jim pressed his long slim legs down my sides. How Jim would hate to miss riding the winner of the Viceroy's Cup. I felt sorry for him.

Captain Thornton led his bonnie horse out through the crowd and on to the course.

As I passed the end of the seats in the stand, I saw Miss Jess. She didn't see me; her eyes were following my chum, Sting, and perhaps the man who was leading him. They had taken our wraps off, of course, and I could see that Sting outclassed us all in point of thoroughbred beauty. I wasn't jealous, for I knew that he was as plucky as he was good to look upon.

It was a mile and a quarter to go, so none of us bothered much at the start—we knew we'd have enough of it before we got to the finishing post. I knew the starter wouldn't send us off until I, the

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favorite, was in a good place; so as soon as I saw Sting had the best of the start, I broke away. The flags fell, both of them, and we rushed along.

When we were standing, there didn't seem to be much wind, but as we tore through it, it roared in our ears and snapped and crackled at the jockeys colors, like the sound of the lashing of whips. Archie was sitting quietly on the little chestnut, and Jim had taken a gentle pull at my teeth with the bit.

On the back of the course, after we'd gone half-a-mile, two of our mates commenced to creep up on the outside. I could see that Sting had his eye on them, and so had Archie. Neither of us paid any attention to them. We could pass that pair whenever we wished.

Rounding the turn toward the old stand, half a mile from the finish, Robin Hood showed his nose close to my shoulder. I galloped a little faster up on the inside of Sting. I knew if Robin Hood got in front his big clumsy bulk might bar the road for the little horse's rush home.

Gradually as we came opposite the old stand, I worked my way on the inside past Sting.

"Keep close behind," I gasped, as we raced nose and nose past the old stand.

Neither of our riders had moved in the saddle yet. They were good generals both of them; they

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knew that so far we two were playing the game for keeps.

Gradually I drew away from the little horse. I heard his rider, Archie, speak to him coaxingly once, but the little fellow did not respond; he had faith in me.

Just at the corner of the straight there was a mad scramble for places. Robin Hood's big thundering hoofs were pounding the course to dust at my side. I could feel Sting's hot breath on my quarters, and knew that his nose was pushing close up for the place I had promised him.

Table Top, Robin Hood, and First Water came with a rush on the outside; whips cracking, colors snapping in the wind, and a hurricane of sand being thrown up by the eager, crunching hoofs. That was where the race was to be settled they knew; if they could not swing into the stretch well in line with me, they were done for.

Suddenly I swerved to the left. With an oath Jim put all his strength on my right rein. Further out I bored, until I bumped against Robin Hood. The scramble was fiendish.

Then the golden nozzle of my little friend showed on my right. I could hear Archie chirruping eagerly to the gallant horse. Next he was clear of them, and galloping a length in front of me, still on the inside close to the rails. Jim

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jabbed his sharp spurs into my flanks as I straight-end out for home, but I paid no attention to that—I did not blame him.

Up the straight we raced like that—Sting's powerful hoofs driving the hot earth into our faces.

As we neared the stand I could hear the roar of voices; it was like the sound of the waves beating against the ship I crossed the ocean in. I kept my head just in front of Robin Hood; I could hear his rider cracking at the big horse's great sides with the whip.

Nose and nose, Robin Hood and I raced; slowly we were drawing up on Sting; inch by inch we gained on him. I thought of swerving again on Robin Hood, but Table Top was on my right now—his head lapped on my shoulder; I had to take care of them both. It was terrible.

Sting was gradually coming back to us. Would it all be thrown away? He had not far to go; surely he would last out long enough to win.

I saw him falter—Archie's whip went in the air; the gallant little horse swerved, pitched forward, and suddenly disappeared as we drove by him in our mad rush. The hot blood mounted to my brain—it was all Robin Hood's fault. *He* should not win, anyway.

The bit was loose in my mouth; there was no

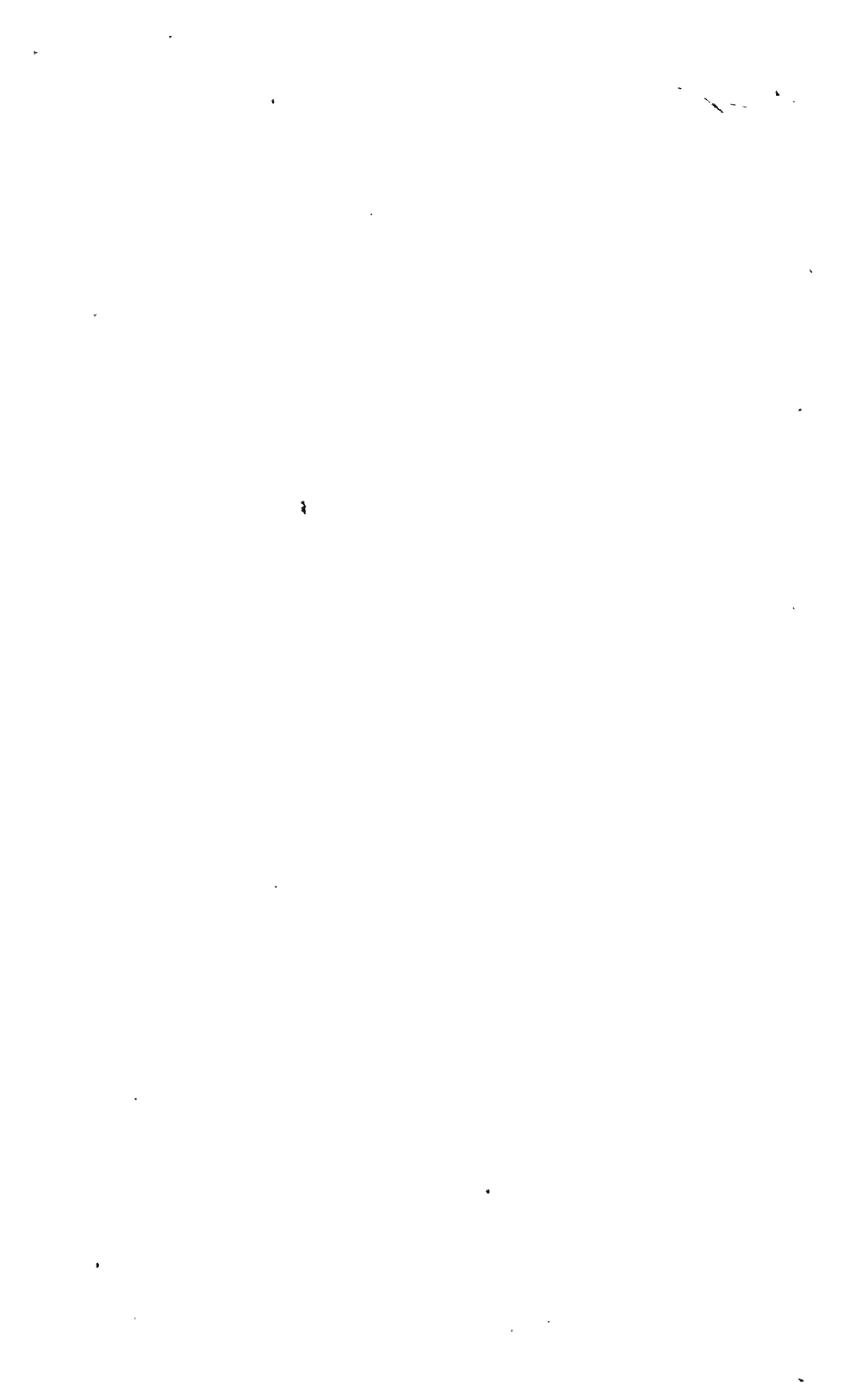
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restraining pull. I shot forward as I had in the finish for the Nizam's Cup, a length ahead of Robin Hood.

When I pulled up and walked back, I saw a big crowd on the course. They were standing about Sting. I looked at the seat where Miss Jess had sat when I went out. Her face was buried in her handkerchief, and I wished that I had dropped instead of my gallant chum.

It was all thrown away, for Sting was dead—a dozen lengths from the finish. The vet said he had broken his heart. Game to the last—the Gladiateur blood.

I couldn't count at that time, but there was more than one heart broken—three I think.



THE SCORING OF THE RAJA



The Scoring of the Raja

BURRAPARA was Raja of his own domain after a fashion. The domain of Burrapara was on the Madras side, two days steady steaming from Calcutta.

His father, the old Raja, aided by a bull-necked *Dewan* (Prime Minister) had ground down the *ryots* (farmers) for tax-money until the whole Raj had become practically bankrupt.

Then the British *Sirdar* (Government) stepped in and platonically arranged things. That's the *Sirdar's* prerogative in India.

Under the new *régime* thirty-six lakhs a year flowed into the coffers, and the burden on the shoulders of the *ryots* was lighter than it had been in the memory of ten generations. The Raja was allowed twelve lakhs a year for himself and court, while the *Sirdar* took the other twenty-four for managing the country, and incidentals.

The Double X Hussars were stationed at Burrapara as part of the governing faculty. It was like sending a public school to a watering place for duty. There were white palaces, and leisure Brah-

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mins, and horses without stint; a big polo ground, a fine race course, and a proper oriental atmosphere as background.

The Double X contingent had everything in life to make them happy—except the Burrapara Cup. Each year, for three years, they had reached out with a “by-your-leave-gentlemen” for this bit of plate, but each year it had gone back to grace the sideboard of the Raja.

Burrapara himself was a sportsman from the first tinkle of the bell. He gathered leopards and kept them in a cage; and once a year turned them out on the plain for an improved pig-sticking bout. This was at Christmas time.

The Double X took themselves to horse and hunted “Spots” with their lances. In the three years only two fellows had been mauled with sufficient intentness to cause their death—that is, two European officers; perhaps a score of beaters and shikarries had also been mauled, but they were His Highness’s subjects, and did not figure on the European side of the ledger; so it was good sport, and of a fair interest.

The polo was as fast as they played it in Tirhoot, which is like looking at polo from the topmost pinnacle; and not one of the Double X played a bit faster or closer on the ball than Burrapara himself.

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From an earthly point of view it was almost a paradise for men whose lines were cast along that plane. As I have said, the only unreasoning thing was the Cup—they could not get that. Yearly it sat big in pride of place at the annual Race Meet. It was donated by the Raja for an open handicap steeplechase of three miles. It was a retroactive donation, for his own stable always won it. That was why the Double X were sad.

Captain Woolson started it. "If you fellows will back me up," he said, "we'll land that mug this try."

"Going to ham-string the Raja's horses?" Devlin asked. But Devlin had no head for deep plots, Woolson knew that; he was only a lieutenant who danced well.

"The Raja gets this crazy old plate back every time because he's got the best nags," Woolson observed with an air of conviction.

"There may be something in that," Devlin answered, setting his glass down with a sort of "hear! hear!" ring.

"Devlin, you're an imbecile. You make remarks that are not in the game. What I mean is that we haven't a gee-gee in the whole bally troop that Burrapara can't give pounds to, with, at least, a dozen Arabs."

"That's what's the matter, Woolson," one of the officers said; "we're beaten before the race

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starts—that's what's the matter with getting the Cup."

"It's a great discovery," said Devlin, sarcastically.

"Look here, youngster, shut up!" said Captain Lutyens, wearily; "it's too hot to blather. Woolson's got a scheme, or he wouldn't be talking—talking's all rot, anyway."

"Yes," continued Woolson, "the Raja is as slick as a Brahmin. He gets fifteen or twenty Arabs down from Abdul Rahman at Bombay, gallops them a bit—God knows where, we never see the trial—and the best of the lot is chucked into this handicap light, being a green one, and beats all our well-pounded nags out."

"Oh, fiddlesticks!" exclaimed Devlin, impatiently; "all the fellows know that. Your discovery is like going to hear 'Pinafore'—it's antique. Besides, it's not the Raja at all; it's O'Neill that does the trick. You're an unsophisticated lot, and O'Neill knows just what your nags can do. What do you suppose the Raja keeps him for—his beauty? it's to play the English game against you Feringhis."

Lutyens threw a box of matches at Devlin's head by way of entreaty, and the latter went out on the veranda swearing there was a conspiracy to keep him out of the good thing.

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"Go on, Woolson," said Lutyens; "tell us how to do up the Raja. That young ass is out of it now, so go on with the disclosure."

"Well, we'll have to get a horse down from up country on the quiet to do the trick. What do you think?"

"Where'll you get him?" asked Lutyens.

"Some of you fellows remember Captain Frank, don't you—Frank Jocelyn.

"I do," said Lutyens, decisively. "I've had to live in retirement, financially, since I joined him in a big thing we were to pull off at Lucknow once. But he's always got a fast horse; generally—yes."

"Well, he's got one called Saladin now, that you simply couldn't handicap down to the form of the Raja's lot."

The others waited, and Woolson continued unravelling his brilliant plot:

"I saw a note in one of the Calcutta papers about this Saladin brute, and wrote up to Doyne. Doyne says he's dicky on his legs, but he'd stand a prep. for one race, especially in the soft going here. He's never won yet, because his legs wouldn't stand training on the Calcutta course. It's as hot and hard as a lime-kiln, as you fellows know. If we could buy him from Captain Frank, and play him a bit in polo here, he'd be sure to get in the

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handicap with a light weight, and we'd even up things with His Highness."

"I'm in it, if it's all on the square," said Lutyens. "The Raja's a good sort, and we must have it all straight."

"Gad! I'll tell him we're going to win with Saladin, if we get him," exclaimed Woolson. "But we mustn't let Captain Frank know about it; he'd never let any sort of a game go through unless he was Viceroy of it himself. We'll get Doyne to buy the horse, and Jocelyn can discover accidentally that he's being sent up to Tirhoot among the indigo sahibs, or to Heaven, or to almost any place but here."

"I'll stand doing Captain Frank up," said Lutyens with candor. "His hand is against every man, and, *pro tem.*, we'll send a punitive expedition against him. I don't mind that a bit."

The truth of the matter as concerning Woolson was, that there was a standing feud between him and Jocelyn over some brilliant *coup* at Lucknow, and he knew the Captain wouldn't sell him a horse at any price.

So that was the inception of the plot. Woolson was commissioned to acquire Saladin. He wrote his friend Captain Doyne to buy the horse as cheaply as he could—warned him against Captain Frank's rapacity, and explained that Saladin would

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be supposed to go to any part of the British Empire but Burrapara.

Doyne executed his commission with diplomatic enthusiasm. Jocelyn wanted three thousand rupees. Doyne offered two thousand, and half the first purse the horse won, plate not to count. Theoretically that should have represented a considerable sum—in point of fact, Doyne chuckled softly to himself over this commercial victory, for he knew that Saladin would only win the Cup at Burrapara and no prize money.

The horse was bought and shipped in a roundabout way to his new owners.

Woolson played him in polo just twice, then pretended to make a discovery. "I'm going to keep that chestnut brute for the races," he assured the Raja, "he can gallop a bit."

Burrapara smiled pensively, for he had Shahbaz in his stable, and it would take a rare good horse to beat him.

O'Neill was an ex-Hussar officer who had found the service too fast for his limited income. Influential friends had farmed him out to the Raja, and he was what might be called commander-in-chief of stables to His Highness. He also made a discovery; the Raja would never have found it out for himself.

"Look here, Your Highness," he said, "the

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Mess have got hold of a good thing at last. I don't know where they puckerowed that white-faced Arab, but he's a rare good one. He'll beat Shahbaz for the Cup."

"And—?" said the Raja, with oriental control.

"We must play the game too, Your Highness."

"You know best, O'Neill Sahib. It's in your department." The Raja liked to play at officialdom.

"Shall I get a horse to beat them, Your Highness?"

"What appropriation do you require?" asked Burrapara.

"Perhaps three or four thousand, Your Highness."

"I will command the treasurer," replied the Raja, laconically.

Now as it happened, O'Neill, before he left the service, had swung along in the racing game beside Captain Frank. "Frank knows every horse in India," he mused, "and if the rupees are forthcoming, he'll get just what I want." Though he had not the faintest idea that the Mess had got one from Frank.

So he wrote by the first mail steamer to Jocelyn:

"The fellows down here have picked up a horse somewhere, called Saladin. Do you know any-

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thing about him? I saw them try him out, and he galloped like a wild boar. If you've got something in your stable to beat him I'll buy it, or lease it. It's all about the Raja's Cup, three miles over timber, for Arabs and Countrybreds. Captain Woolson is at the bottom of it—I think you'll remember him."

Jocelyn puckered his thin lips and whistled long and softly to himself when he read the letter. "My aunt!" he ejaculated, "they played softly. Who the thunder told Woolson about Saladin?"

He shoved the letter into his pocket, lighted a cheroot, and played chess with this new thing for three days. Then he wrote to O'Neill:

"Woolson was born of commercial parents—he gets this thing from his father, who was a successful soap merchant. They bought Saladin from me to go up country. The Raja has my sympathy if he hopes to beat the chestnut with anything he's got there. I have nothing in my stable could look at him over three miles of country.

"But all the same, I think we can beat out this joint stock company. I've got May Queen, and Saladin has always been worked with her. He's a sluggish devil, and has notions. He won't try a yard so long as the mare is galloping beside him; that's because they've worked together so much. He'll just plug along about a neck in front of her,

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and the more you hammer him the sulkier he gets.

"If you've got something fairish good in your stable, and the Raja will pay well for the expedition, I'll send the Queen down, and go myself later on to ride her, for the edification of our friend, the soap merchant's offspring. I'll guarantee you'll beat Saladin, only you must have something good enough to do up the others. Don't let them know where you've got the mare."

These affairs of state were duly laid before the Raja by O'Neill in a general way without too much attention to detail. Kings as a rule don't care for detail, they like to win, that's all. Burrapara simply gleaned that by the aid of a mare, a certain Captain Frank, and his own Shahbaz, he was to win once more his favorite toy; also triumph over the united ingenuity of the Double X Mess. The executive duties he left to O'Neill; also spoke the necessary word to the treasurer.

In two weeks May Queen was in the Raja's stables, and the wise men who had gone out of the West knew not of this back-wash in the tide of their affairs.

Two weeks later Frank Jocelyn sauntered into the Mess of the Double X with his *débonnaire* military swing, as though he had just returned from a week's shikarri, and lived there always.

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"Great gattlings!" exclaimed Luytens; "where in the name of all the Brahmins did you come from? Jocelyn, by all that's holy."

"Where's the balloon?" asked Devlin.

"Nobody ever come here any more?" asked Captain Frank, pitching into a big chair after solemnly grabbing each paw that was extended to him."

"Heaps of ordinary chaps," answered Lutyens.

"But visits like mine are like the cherubs', eh?"

"He's tons like a cherub," muttered Devlin; then aloud, "Here, boy, bring a peg, Captain Sahib's dry."

"Came down to the fair to pick up some smart polo ponies," Jocelyn volunteered. "Any racing at the fair?"

"Heaps," said Lutyens; thinking dismally of the accursed fate that had steered Captain Frank their way when they had got it all cut and dried for Saladin. "Make yourself at home, Jocelyn," he said, "I've got to make a call."

Then he posted down to Woolson's bungalow. "Guess who's here?" he said.

"Anybody big?"

"Size of an elephant."

"The C.C.?"

"No—Jocelyn."

"Good God! Not Captain Frank?"

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Lutyens nodded; Woolson turned pale. "Does he know!" he asked dismally.

"Don't think it. It's a pure fluke, his coming; he's down after some polo *tats*."

Woolson's face showed that he was still mistrustful. "He'll stay for the races, sure."

"Uh-hu!" grunted Lutyens.

"And he'll spot Saladin; he's got devil-eyes, that chap."

"Uh-hu!" again assented Lutyens.

"We'll have to tell him, and beg him to keep quiet."

"I think so."

"You'll have to put him up, Lutyens, to keep him out of their hands."

"All right."

So that night Captain Frank learned to his great surprise that Saladin was in Burrapara. Gracious! but he *was* surprised. How had it happened—he had understood Doyne was sending him up country?

Woolson told the Captain a fairy tale about that part of it; but he had to be made free of the secret that they hoped to win the Cup with Saladin.

"Don't tell the Raja nor O'Neill," begged Lutyens. "The honor of the Double X demands that we win that Cup."

"I'll tell nobody," said Captain Frank. "Let

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everybody find out things for themselves—that's my way of working."

They cracked a bottle of champagne to this noble sentiment, and all that belonged to the Double X was placed at the disposal of Captain Frank during his sojourn amongst them. The Raja had a dozen bungalows splendidly furnished, always at the command of visitors; and Captain Frank assured Lutyens that one of these had already been placed at his disposal, so he declined the Double X Captain's hospitality. "Hang it!" he said to himself, "I can't eat his rations, and sleep in his bed, and play against him; that's too stiff an order."

As race day approached, events outlined themselves more clearly. The Raja had three horses entered for the Cup; Shahbaz, May Queen and Ishmael. Woolson had Saladin, and there were six other entries, not calculated to have much bearing on the history of the Cup.

"What's this May Queen thing?" asked Lutyens.

Nobody knew; not even where she had come from. She was a country-bred without a record, that's all that anybody could say. It didn't matter anyway, Shahbaz was what they had to beat, that was certain. O'Neill was riding this pick of the stable himself.

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Two evenings before the race O'Neill came over to the Mess. He wanted somebody to take the mount on May Queen; the boy who was to have ridden her was ill, he explained.

"Jocelyn will ride for you," exclaimed Lutyens. "He'd get paralysis if he hadn't a mount at a meeting."

"Is she any good?" asked Captain Frank.

"We don't know much about her," answered O'Neill. "We'll declare to win with Shahbaz, but the mare may run well. The Raja'll be delighted if you'll pilot her."

"It'll be better," said Lutyens, "for an outsider to ride than one of our fellows."

"All right, I'll take the mount," exclaimed Captain Frank, "only I'd like to school her a bit tomorrow."

You will see that the tea set had been almost completed; because when Fate undertakes to arrange matters, there is seldom a hitch. Everybody works for Fate—everybody.

Of course there was a big lottery held at the officers' mess the night before the race; and the Burrapara Cup was the main medium for a plunge.

Woolson was suspicious. "I don't like it," he said to Lutyens. "Frank Jocelyn isn't down here for the benefit of his health; and I'll swear he hasn't bought a single gee-gee. We don't know

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anything about that mare; I've tried to find out where she comes from, but nobody knows."

"Do you suppose she's good enough to beat Saladin?" asked Lutyens, doubtingly.

"Well, Jocelyn rides her."

"I'm the cause of that," answered Lutyens.

"You may think so, but to me it looks like a job. O'Neill and Captain Frank knew each other in the old days. If they back the mare in the lotteries, I'm going to have a bit of it," asserted Woolson.

This little cloud of suspicion broadened out, until by the time the lotteries were on, there was a strong tip out that May Queen was a good thing for the Cup. The Mess ran Saladin up to a steep figure when his chances were sold in the lotteries.

Nobody but O'Neill wanted to back Shahbaz, and he went cheap. When May Queen was put up, Jocelyn laughingly made a bid, saying, "I'd back a mule if I rode him in a race."

"You're pretty slick, Mr. Frank," Woolson muttered; and he bid on the mare. This started it, and in the end May Queen fetched nearly as good a price as Saladin. It went that way all the evening; the Mess flattered themselves that they had stood by Saladin pretty well—and they had. Of course Captain Frank couldn't well bid on Saladin, he explained; it was their preserve.

When they were finished at last, Captain Frank

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said to Woolson: "I've got that brute Shahbaz in two lotteries. You'd better take half to hedge your money; you're loaded up with Saladin."

"No, thanks," the other man said, with a clever glint in the corner of his eye, "I've also got May Queen, your mount; I've got enough."

"Do you want to part with a bit of May Queen?" the Captain asked carelessly.

"Not an anna of it. I'll stick to the lot. The Saladin money belongs to the Mess; we bought him together, but the May Queen business is nearly all my own."

He looked sideways at Jocelyn while he said this, watching the blond-mustached face narrowly; then he spoke up with abrupt impetuosity, "Jocelyn, look here, you know all about that mare. Tell me whether it's all right or not."

"I think," answered Jocelyn, leisurely, pouring with judicious exactness half a bottle of soda into his peg glass, "that you fellows here are a bally lot of sharks. You've bought all of Saladin in the lotteries; the most of May Queen, and then want to know what's going to win. You'd better have half of Shahbaz now, and make a certainty."

"No thanks, I'm filled up."

"Do you want to part with a bit of Saladin?"

"Can't do it. All the fellows are in it—all the Mess."

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"I think you're missing it over Shahbaz. O'Neill thinks he'll win," drawled the Captain, appearing terribly solicitous for his enemy's welfare.

A little later Captain Frank rehearsed this scene to O'Neill. "I pretended to want a bit of Saladin, or May Queen, but Woolson wouldn't part with any. Lord! but the father is big in the son. Stuck to his pound of flesh like a proper Ishmaelite. Then I offered him some of Shahbaz in the lottery, but he shut up like a knife; he was afraid I'd force it on him. To-morrow after Shahbaz wins, I'll say to him: 'I wanted you to take a bit of the good thing;' and he'll scowl, because he'll be sick at his stomach. I'll teach them to get a good horse out of me to do up a fine chap like the Raja, and then pay for him out of stakes that are not to be had."

Woolson's version of the same thing to Lutyens was slightly different, which only goes to show that human nature is a complex machine.

"Jocelyn's got stuck with Shahbaz in the lottery, and he's been trying to unload on me. He wanted a piece of Saladin. That's Captain Frank all over; pokes his nose in here on our good thing, roots around until he finds out something, then wants a share."

"I wish he hadn't come," said Lutyens, abstract-

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edly. "Heaven knows what he'll do; he's like a Hindoo juggler."

"He can only win out on May Queen," retorted Woolson, crabbedly; "and I've got the biggest part of her in the lotteries myself."

"Yes, but the other fellows are all down on Saladin, and it's the Cup we're really after, not the rupees."

Woolson said nothing to this. The Cup was all right as a Cup, but it would suit him to land his big *coup* over May Queen.

The next day at the race-course Lieutenant Devlin sauntered up to Captain Frank, and said: "Little Erskine, who is in the Seventh, over in Colombo, is in a bit of a hole; and I'd like to help him out. What I've got's no good to him—'t isn't enough."

"Say, youngster," drawled Jocelyn, "are you one of the forty thieves that got Saladin down here to do up O'Neill and the Raja?"

"Oh, I think the fellows played fair enough," answered Devlin, "but whatever it was they didn't ask my advice; in fact they drummed me out."

"What are the bookies laying against Shahbaz?" queried Captain Frank.

"Five to one," answered Devlin.

"What does Erskine need?"

"Couple of thou., I fancy."

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"Have you got four hundred?"

"Yes; but can Shahbaz——"

"Don't be a damn fool," interrupted Captain Frank, with profane brevity.

It was time to mount for the Burrapara Cup. As they jogged down to the post, Frank ranged alongside of Woolson, who was riding Saladin, and said, "You'd better take half of Shahbaz still"; but Woolson tickled Saladin with the spur, and swerved to one side, pretending not to have heard.

O'Neill was riding Shahbaz, and to him Jocelyn said: "When we've gone half the journey, you slip out in front before Saladin gets his dander up. I'll keep close beside him and he'll never try a yard. But keep on in front, so as not to draw him out."

For a mile and a half, half-a-dozen of the nine starters were pretty well up. As the pace increased, and Shahbaz drew away in the lead, all of the others but Saladin and May Queen commenced to drop out of it. At two miles Shahbaz was six lengths in front; Saladin and May Queen were swinging along under a steady pull, neck and neck.

"He means to stick to me, and beat me out," mused Woolson.

"The blasted idiot is kidding himself," thought

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Jocelyn. "He thinks he's got to hang to my coat-tails to win."

Saladin was keeping his eye on May Queen. He had been separated from his stable chum for weeks, and now he was galloping along beside her as in the old days. His soft Arab heart was glad. What a pity she couldn't gallop a bit faster though. The thrill of strength was in his muscles, and he would like to unstring his great tendons that soft warm day, and spurn the red, yielding earth. His leg wasn't a bit sore; ah, there was another horse on in front there. Why couldn't May Queen hurry up?

Soon his rider's legs commenced to hitch at his ribs, and Woolson was chirruping at him to move on. If they'd hurry his chum he would.

Woolson was getting anxious. There was only half a mile to go now, and Shahbaz was still well in the lead. He had ridden Saladin under a pull all the time, and fancied that his horse had a lot left in him; but now when he shook him up he didn't respond.

"Go on!" he shouted to Captain Frank. "We'll never catch Shahbaz."

"Go on yourself," answered the Captain, in schoolboy retort.

Woolson brought his whip down on Saladin's flank. Stung by it the Arab sprang forward, and

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for a second Woolson's heart jumped with joy. He felt the great muscles contract and spread under him, and fancied that he would soon overtake the dark bay in front. The mare struggled too; Saladin heard her laboring at his quarters, and waited patiently.

"Steady, you brute!" Captain Frank ejaculated to the mare, but Saladin knew the voice, and after that the man on his back amounted to very little in the forces governing the race.

With whip, and spur, and profane appeals Woolson labored at his mount, throwing him out of his stride a dozen times. The mare struggled and strained every nerve to keep up with her stable companion. Saladin rebelled against the fool who was riding him, and sulked with Arab persistence; raced as he had always done at home with the mare, neck and neck.

Shahbaz was tiring badly. At the last fence he nearly fell, striking the top rail with his toes out of sheer weariness. There was only a short run in on the level now. Would he last out? If Saladin ever ranged alongside of him it would be all over, Jocelyn knew that. In the struggle he would forget about May Queen, and shoot by Shahbaz as though he were dead.

Woolson was in an agony of suspense. Shahbaz would certainly win, and he might have saved

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his money by taking Frank's offer. A sudden resolve seized him. Saladin was sulking and he was worse beaten than the horse; he could not ride him out. He would take Frank's offer now.

Bending his face around toward Jocelyn he gasped "I'll—take—half—Shahbaz——" then he disappeared. That final grab had effectually settled the race. They were rising at the last jump, and his movement caused Saladin to swerve. The horse struck the rail heavily, and Woolson was shot out of the saddle, and planted inches deep in the soft earth on the outside of the course.

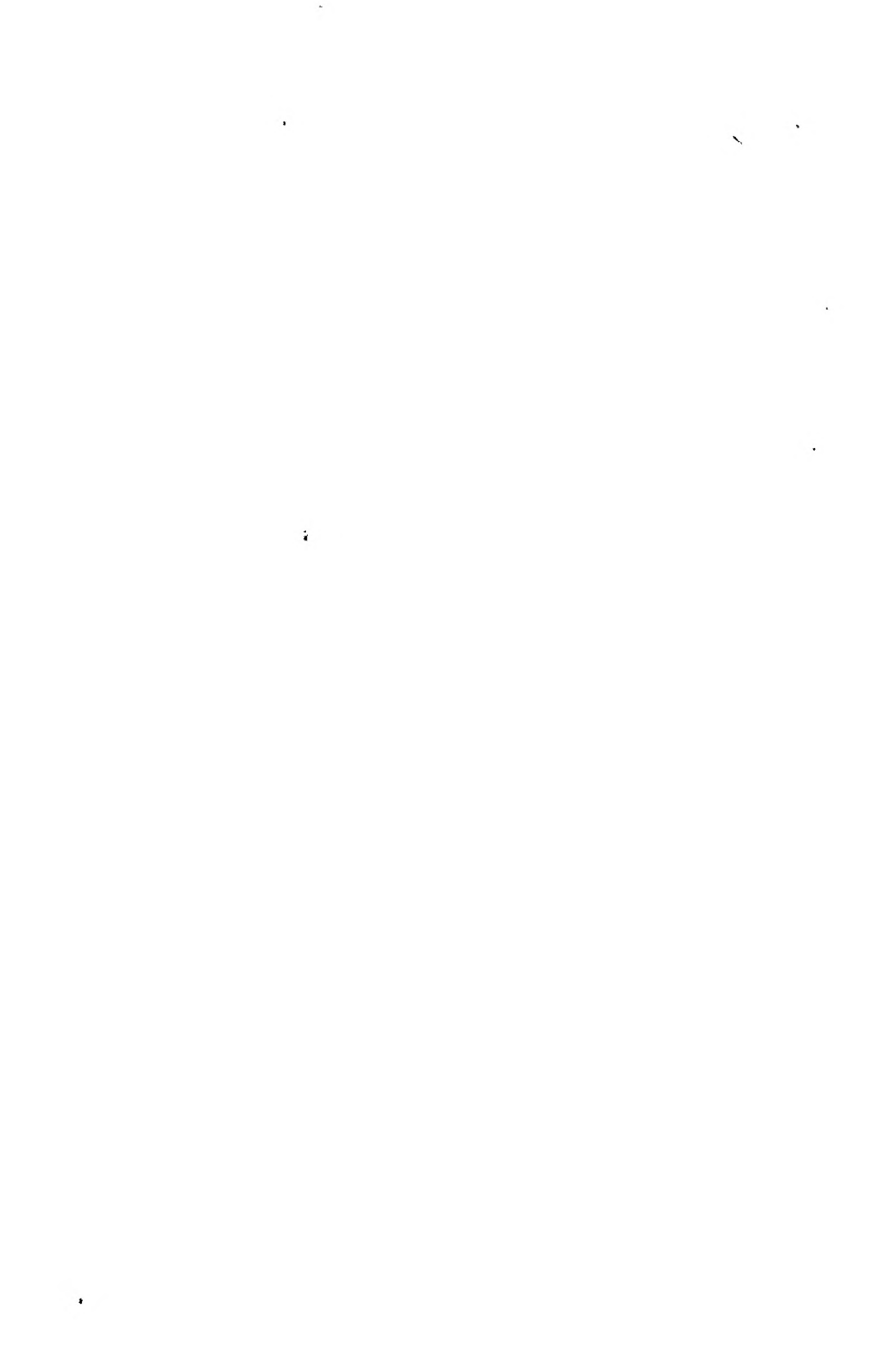
It had looked a close thing from the stand. "Saladin'll win in a walk," the Mess fellows said just before the fall: "Woolson's been waiting on O'Neill, and now he'll come away and win as he likes."

When Woolson vacated the saddle so energetically, a groan went up from them. When Shahbaz slipped by the judge's stand, three lengths in front of May Queen, they groaned again; but with official politeness cheered lustily for the Raja.

His Highness sat complacently eyeing the excited people. It was a very small thing to get agitated about, for he had won, you see.

Captain Frank bought Saladin back for a thousand rupees; beaten horses go cheap.

HER MAJESTY'S GUINEAS



Her Majesty's Guineas

I HAVE no wish to be shot, so I say the mare's name was Princess May; but, if any one have no fear of the shooting, let him say the right name.

And so of all the other names, for there live many men who know of this thing even as I tell it.

Some years ago, perhaps seven, perhaps twenty-three, John Horning, who owned Princess May, declared that, by the favor of heaven, he would win the Queen's Plate in Toronto with her, and, unless there was something extra good in the race that year, he would win it anyway.

That was John's way—he had much faith in himself; and now that he had tried Princess May very highly, he had still greater faith in her.

His other horse, Iron Duke, had run well up in The Guineas the year before—almost won—and now Princess May, in a trial, had simply romped home in front of Iron Duke.

But John, he kept the trial to himself, and the bookmakers went on cheerfully laying sixty to one against Princess May's chances for Her Majesty's Guineas.

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So gently, and without much ado, honest John kept nibbling at the sixty to one through an agent till he stood to win a pile over the mare.

Dublin had been favorite all through the winter books. He belonged to a man who thought as little of winning the Queen's Plate as he did of buying a good cigar—that is, it seemed just as easy for him to do. So, when Marchmont, the owner, said that Dublin was the best of his string, people said, "Dublin will win."

Then Dick Selby took a hand.

He was a plunger of the old school. Horses, stocks, wheat, whatever he went at, he played the game as though the world would be wound up on Saturday night, and he had only one week to get the whole thing into his hands.

He backed Dublin—pounded him from tens down to three to one. His friends stood by and watched him with admiration taking all the money the bookies would lay; but that was because they didn't know what the quiet, gray-whiskered little old man up north knew.

Early in the winter Selby had taken a flyer in wheat, and burned up all his own money, and a large slice from his sister's fortune.

His sister's money he held in trust till a few legal technicalities should be cleared up, when it would be handed over to her.

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And, though among his friends he was the cool plunger, alone, and in the morning he was—ah! It was too horrible; he used to put it from him. Dublin *must* win, and then he would be all right.

Of course, the owner of Dublin did not like it. Though he raced for the honor of the thing—the winning of the blue ribbon of the Canadian turf—still, he liked to have his bit on. And when the warm May sunshine dried up the Woodbine tracks so that they could extend Dublin in a stiff mile-and-a-quarter gallop, and he worked out in winning time, the owner started in to back him.

Marchmont was followed in by a mob of small bettors till his horse's price was cut to even money.

Four days before the race a strange thing happened. Princess May's price dropped from sixty to two to one.

This was a facer to Selby. The news came to him like a hot blast, scorching and burning the very marrow in his mind. She must have given a marvellous trial to effect this change. And then John Horning was always an uncertain quantity; he was liable at any time to have something particularly good up his sleeve—that good thing he evidently had now.

It would be a peculiar irony of fate if Princess May were to break Selby, for his brother-in-law, Dalton, was to ride the mare in the race.

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He and Dalton were first-class enemies. Their quarrel had started over May Selby's money, and Dalton had declared more than once that if Selby did not keep out of his way, he would put a bullet through him.

Selby was a good judge of pace, and when he saw Princess May gallop on the Woodbine course, and got at the particulars of her trial with Iron Duke, bit by bit, he concluded that a little diplomacy would be needed to help Dublin win the Queen's Plate that year.

He had an enormous amount at stake, and he could well spare a good slice of it to stop the mare. But there was a very serious obstacle in the way—that obstacle was Dalton.

"He's straight, curse him!" said Selby to his partner, Rob Brien, "and as stubborn as a mule. It's ten to one he'd shoot the man who tried to bribe him."

"Well, that'd be all right," said Brien, reflectively; "that would stop him winning quicker than anything."

Selby's pale, gambler's face worked convulsively for a minute. A desperate idea had taken possession of his mind; his large, bright eyes seemed on fire; he saw a way out of his difficulty. It was hazardous—it was terrible, but his honor and almost life were at stake.

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"You're right, Brien," he said, huskily, "that'll stop him. You just help me a little in this—do as I say—and we'll pull the thing off right enough. Where's Skipper Madden?" he continued. "We'll put him up to fix Dalton one way or the other. The Skipper's got nerve and can do the job brown. Yes," he continued musingly, as he pieced the new thing out behind the gray-red eyes that were narrowed to a slit by the contracted lids, "the Skipper's not much of an asset beyond his nerve. He has dribbled into me for a thousand if he's had a cent, and now he must pay back by taking a chance."

Rob Brien started, and almost crouched forward as if fascinated by the callous murderousness of Selby's tone.

"Good God, Dick! You don't mean to set the Skipper up against Dalton's gun—you're mad—it's too long a price to pay——"

He stopped and gazed curiously at the lines that had curved Selby's face, close to the nostrils; it was the fret-work of a smile—a sneering smile. The thin lips parted, and the sneerer said:

"It isn't a question of price at all; 'tis a case of *must*, and Skipper has got to take a chance, that's all."

"What do you want me to do in the matter—I draw the line at murder?" queried Brien.

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"Write Dalton to come here over the estate business; he won't come to see me. I'll arrange with the Skipper to—to—to do as I tell him, that's all."

Brien picked up his hat, and, moving toward the door, dragging his feet reluctantly, said:

"Well, Dick, I'm not in this game, see? I'm not in it!" he reiterated angrily, as the other caught him by the arm.

Selby tightened his grasp on his partner's arm, and, tipping his head forward, whispered something in Brien's ear.

The latter paled a little, gave a low whistle of astonishment through his plump lips, then asked suspiciously:

"That's straight, is it—you swear there's no trap for me in this?"

Selby stood back a pace, dropping Brien's arm, and nodded, adding, "it's straight this time, Rob; you'll never know you were in it."

That afternoon Dick Selby called on his sister, knowing that Dalton was at the Woodbine race-course.

The girl was tried in her allegiance to the two men who were at enmity with each other. She felt that Dick had acted badly, but he was her brother, and her husband had become possessed

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of such a fierce resentment, that he might at any moment do a foolish, desperate act.

"Keep out of his way, Dick—for my sake, do. See!" and, jumping up, she opened a drawer, and pointed to a revolver lying there.

"It looks quite harmless," her brother answered, mockingly.

"Yes, there, perhaps, though the sight of it makes me shudder; but Jack never goes your way but he puts it in his pocket. He thinks I don't know and don't see him slip it stealthily in his pocket."

Selby's small, beady eyes snapped and glittered with a vicious, pleased look. "It's loaded?" he asked.

"Always!"

"Nice boy, Jack!" was the brother's careless comment. "Get me a drink of water, May please," he added, "I'm deuced dry."

When she left the room he picked up the pistol, and examined its working mechanism in a hurried, nervous manner. When he heard her footsteps, he put it back in the drawer, and turned to meet her.

"You'll let Mr. Brien have a talk with Jack, won't you?" the girl begged of Dick Selby.

He promised, and as he went down the steps, he chuckled softly, and muttered to himself,

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"We'll take all the shoot out of Mr. Jack, I fancy. I'd like to see his nerve crack up just once. And it will—*by God! it will!* That Smith & Wesson looked vicious, but it will make even the Skipper go white under the gills when he looks down its nozzle."

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When Dalton returned home, there was a letter from Brien asking him to come to his office that evening on a most important matter that could not be put off until the next day. He surmised that there had been some sudden crash in the affairs of Selby, for he knew well of the latter's plunging.

All the evening he was restless; the night seemed vibrant with evil unrest. At nine he stealthily slipped his pistol into his hip-pocket, thinking his wife had not observed the movement. When she spoke he started.

"I wish you would leave that weapon at home, Jack," she said pleadingly.

"There'll be less trouble if I take it," he answered.

"But you won't quarrel with Dick, will you, Jack—promise me that?"

"If he's there I'll come away without opening my mouth," he answered.

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When Dalton arrived at the office, Brien and the Skipper were there. They weren't long in getting to the "important business." It was a point blank offer made by the Skipper to Dalton to pull Princess May in the race.

They'd had a drink in the office; that was to mellow the bargain a bit; and Dalton had had one or two before he came, so in place of mellowing down, he fired up.

He had a choice vocabulary when he got started; he embellished his remarks with barbaric adjectives. He didn't like the Skipper at the best of times; in fact, with his hot temper, there were a good many men he didn't like, and who returned the compliment.

"Who are you acting for, anyway?" he said to Madden, with a playful allusion to the latter's ancestors. "You've got no stuff to buy anybody with. Whose money's in the game? You ought to be ashamed of yourself being used as a cat's-paw by others."

The Skipper's tongue was not quite so ready as Dalton's.

"It appears to me you're gallopin' a bit wide, Dalton," he replied; "seems what most concerns you is whether you'll pull the mare and let Dublin win or not. You lose sight of the point at issue. It's not who I'm working for, or whether I like the

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job or not—it's whether you'll take two thousand and just ease the mare a little at the finish."

Dalton declared he would not for ten times the amount, and, growing angry in his indignation, applied some pet names to Skipper Madden.

The Skipper replied by intimating that Dalton was growing virtuous in his old age; that he had reformed since he pulled Mandrake's head off two years before.

"You're a liar!" swore Dalton, white with rage.

Madden's reply was a slap in the face which set the other's teeth jingling.

Like a flash the too ready pistol was out, and "bang—bang!" it went; so close that the flash blinded the victim and the flames scorched his face.

The Skipper dropped forward on his knees, and lay in a convulsive, quivering heap on the floor.

Brien jumped forward and tore the pistol from Dalton's fingers.

At the same instant the office door opened and Selby rushed in, exclaiming, "My God! what are you fellows up to?"

Brien turned Madden over on his back, and raised his head a little. There was a splash of blood on the forehead, and more on his throat.

"This is your work, curse you!" said Dalton to Selby. "You put that man up to bribe me."

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"All the same, I didn't tell you to shoot him, and you'll swing for it right enough."

A thought of his wife smothered Dalton's passion, and his nerves went to pieces all at once. To swing, and leave her the widow of a murderer!

"There's no good talking that way," said Brien, interrupting, "the thing's done—he's dead as a doornail, poor devil," and he let the head drop back on the floor, and stood up.

"There's no use of any one swinging for this job," he continued, "it wouldn't do any good. Nobody knows about this thing but ourselves. Mad-den had no friends who'll trouble to hunt him up, either."

Dalton clutched at the straw of hope.

"Look here," he said, "I don't care for myself, but I don't want to kill May, too, by swinging for this. And she's your sister, Dick. If you can cover this up so it's never known, I'll do anything you want—anything in the world. I know if my mount wins the Guineas Dick'll be broke, and I'll pledge you my word of honor that she won't win it."

It had worked out the way Dick had planned.

"All right," he said, "here's my hand on it. We'll take the body over to my summer house on the Island to-night. If, the day after to-morrow,

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the Princess does not win, that night the body will be dropped far out in the lake, with a weight that will hold it down. If the mare wins perhaps somebody will find the body out on the sands."

Brien jerked the shells out of Dalton's revolver, and put them in his pocket.

"What's that for?" asked Dalton.

"Well, it wouldn't be wise for you to be found with two discharged shells in your pistol, and the Skipper with two holes in his head. Besides, we might want these shells in case——"

"The mare wins," added Dalton, as Brien hesitated.

"Exactly."

"The mare mustn't win—*shan't* win," said Dalton, with a pale face.

The next morning Horning, Princess May's owner, sent for Dalton.

"Somebody's been trying to get at the mare," he told him, "tried to get in her stable last night. I've got a trusty boy watching her, but boys are boys, and there's big money going about."

"I'll sleep in the stable to-night, if you wish," said Dalton.

"It'll take a load off my mind, if you will," Horning replied. "It's the last night, and if she's kept right she can't lose to-morrow. It'll make a

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big difference to me, too, Jack. You're the only man that I feel I can trust thoroughly."

Dalton shuddered when Horning said this, but he answered at once:

"I'll take care of her to-night, and no doubt she'll take care of the others to-morrow."

The Princess was stabled in a square box stall built in the centre of the stable proper. Outside this stall, between its door and the door of the stable, Dalton spread his blankets that night on a pile of clean sweet hay. He meant to sleep there in the dark, and if anybody came to tamper with the mare, give them a warm reception. The horror of the preceding night was strong upon him. His hands were red with the blood of a fellow-creature, and a noose dangled about his neck, needing but a twitch from one or two men to strangle him.

It was too horrible. He lighted a lantern and allowed it to burn turned low.

When, after a time, he did fall asleep, it was to dream of men being hanged, dozens of them, all about him. A long row of figures were placed on horses, the nooses adjusted, and then the horses galloped away from under them, leaving the bodies dangling and swinging in the air.

Not all—one had escaped. He could see the face of this rider—it was himself. Now he raced

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with the riderless horses; in front of them he dashed past the winning-post. As he did so a noose swung down and lifted him clear from the saddle, choking and strangling him.

He woke with a start, great drops of perspiration on his forehead.

The upper half of the stable door was open, and a pale, haggard face with a great splash of blood on the forehead, was staring at him just over the top of the lower part—it was “the Skipper.”

His heart stood still.

As he gazed the face disappeared, and when he tottered to his feet and looked out after it there was nothing to be seen—nobody in sight.

All through the rest of the night he sat there and brooded, not daring to sleep again.

“You look tired, old man,” said Horning in the morning. “Nothing came near the mare, I suppose?”

“No, nothing!” said Dalton, wearily.

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The sun shone gloriously that afternoon! The green lawn, and the huge grand stand, the paddock, and the “betting ring” underneath the stand, were thronged with eager, jostling, pushing, holiday-makers. The bright dresses picked out jewel-

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spots in the gray setting of the men's darker clothes.

Everybody was eager and joyous—everybody but Dalton, who sat sullenly on a bench like a man waiting for the sentence from a black-capped judge. He was waiting for the race of the day, the Queen's Plate—Her Majesty's Guineas.

Down in the betting-ring Selby was pounding away at Dublin again as though it were all over, bar shouting.

Presently Horning came and beckoned to Dalton, "It's time to get your colors on and weigh out," he said.

In the dressing-room, as Dalton suddenly looked up from pulling on his tight racing-boots, he saw that blood-splashed face at the window again—he could have sworn to it; but in an instant it was gone—vanished.

"Who was that at the window?" he said to Horning, making a great effort to control his voice.

"I didn't see anybody," the owner replied, and he looked at Dalton, queerly. "I tell you what it is, old man, you're nervous. You've been wastin' too much; you're all a-tremble."

As Dalton came away from the scales, and walked toward Princess May's stall, Brien met him. He held something carelessly in the hollow of his hand just in front of him.

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The jockey looked, and saw that two empty brass shells nestled in the hollow palm.

"Is it all right?" asked Brien, in an undertone.

"Yes," answered Dalton between his teeth, feeling his face go white at the sight of the shells.

Down the course, past the grand stand, in the preliminary canter, the bonnie mare moved under him like a perfect piece of mechanism. No switching of the tail, no laying back of the ears—only a little reaching at the bit, as though she would stretch out and gallop away from the others, and win the Plate for her owner.

"There goes an honest pair," said old John Horning, as he climbed to his favorite perch in the stand, screwing his glasses out nervously.

"Two to one the Princess! Even money Dublin!" was the sound of the angry roar down in the betting ring. Even now the subtle influence of something in the air had got its work in, and the mare was travelling out in the betting.

The six other horses in the race were all at long odds, from four to twenty to one.

"Let her move along freely, and stay close by Dublin. The mare'll beat him at the finish," had been Hornung's parting injunction to Dalton.

Down in the straight, just beyond the grand stand, the horses were scoring for a start.

Suddenly the starter's flag, which had been flut-

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tering in the summer's breeze, cut downward like a sword thrust, there was a mad scurry of the half-crazed horses, a shuffling in and out of the bright colors like sun-kissed diamonds, and, ere the cry, "They're off!" had died away in the crowd, the horses were rushing by the people in the first time round.

Even then the powerful swinging gallop of the Princess caught the eye of the throng. She was racing along as though it really weren't a race at all.

With his nose on her quarter, on the outside, galloped Dublin, strong too, his glossy black skin shimmering in the sunlight like a mirror.

Dalton could feel the clock-like swing under him. "It's an outrage," he thought, "to stop her." If it were not for that other lying over there on the island, he felt that he could gallop, gallop till he choked the others off—beat them the length of a street. And to sit there like a cur and let the gallant mare break her heart pulling at the iron bit!

But beyond the winning-post was the noose; if he came in first it would surely settle down about his neck.

A quarter of a mile from home there were only two horses in it, Dublin and the Princess. The mare was fighting for her head, coaxing Dalton

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to let her go on, while Dublin's jockey was moving in the saddle, shaking his mount up.

"The Princess wins!" yelled the stand, as the mare swung into the straight, half a length in front of the black.

"He'll never catch her now," said Horning to a friend. "She can gallop that gait all day."

Then a silence fell over the multitude—something was wrong on the track. A feeling almost of awe came over the throng; the loud-voiced bettors were still, all craned their necks to see what it was.

"He's drunk!" somebody exclaimed.

"The mare's beat!" said another.

Curses and imprecations, and useless cries of "Go on, Dalton!" struggled with each other in the soft May air.

Dalton could not hear even the undefinable roar of the stand mob; but in his soul was a beseeching wail of despair. "Win, win, win!" echoed from the tense cords of his whole being. Well he knew that if he but sat still the mare would win the race herself. Now he was rolling about in the saddle, sawing the hissing wind with his whip as though he were riding for his life. What mockery! Every move of his body was breaking the heart of the gallant little mare. And how often he had pictured himself crouched

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on the withers of a good horse, feeling that he had this great race at his mercy. He had dreamed of winning it, and of coming back to weigh in, to be carried out from the scales afterward on a floral chair of triumph. And now he was doing the most degrading thing a man could do—he was betraying an honest man who trusted him, and, almost a greater crime, choking off one of the grandest horses that ever looked through a bridle.

He was riding like a drunken man, his face ghastly white. Straight as an arrow the black horse was creeping up on the outside; the gray-black muzzle was at his stirrup. Some one in the outfield was shouting: "The rider's beat! Dalton's beat! He's sold the race—the swine!" He heard it; it came cutting in on the sharp wind like a curse.

Why should he cease to be a man forever? Why should he not risk the noose? Had he not risked his neck a thousand times in races? Had he not squeezed through an opening many times when it seemed almost certain death? And the thrill of the mare's gallop came vibrating up through the thin saddle, and filled his body and soul with the exhilaration of conquest. The yellow flash of Dublin's colors was in his eye now, as the black's jockey drew level; now he could see jockey Martin's face—there was a leer of triumph

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on the pinched lips as the boy watched him sideways.

They were opposite the stand, and in four seconds it would cease—this struggle. He must choose. Was he not like many a higher man tried sorely—death or dishonor. "A swine!" he set his teeth hard; he crouched low over the withers; he swayed his lithe body forward—*straight forward*—twice. The mare seemed to flatten out, and sweep steady and strong in her stride; the brown head crept up inch by inch until it rose and fell level with the strained, tired face of the big black.

Dalton knew by the blur of painted boards that they had passed the judge's box—the winning post. Had he won? He did not know—no one knew—no one but the judge, it had been so close. Even the mob was hushed—it was too close for the hazard of a guess.

There was a minute of delay, then Number 5 slipped into place and ran up the notice pole. A mighty shout shook the stand, "The Princess wins! Good old Dalton!"

Sick at heart, Dalton hurried to escape from the congratulations of his friends, after he had passed the scales. As he cut across the paddock to the dressing-room, he almost ran into three men. He stared in amazement—one of the trio was Skipper

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Madden, looking very much unlike a corpse; another was Selby, looking very like one.

Dalton gave a great sigh of relief. He had been tricked, but he had won out—that was enough.

Next day he saw Madden again, and he wrung from him the story of the blank cartridges, and the red paint he had used to make the blood.



ACCORDING TO ORDERS



According to Orders

MY Arab pony Shahzada had won everything in sight at Magabad so handily that I got it into my head he was very fast. Lucknow is the Mecca for all fast ponies, even for those that are thought to be fast, so the end of it was that I took Shahzada down to the Spring Meeting, with the laudable intention of amassing wealth in one brief week.

I had been in Lucknow four days, and an intolerable desolation had come to me; Shahzada had cut up terribly—his Mugabad form was no good for Lucknow. And the financial market was, so far as I was concerned, what might be called stringent.

I was sitting in the veranda of my hotel after tiffin on the fourth day, thinking bitterly of the difference a second or two in the speed of a horse made in the affairs of a man, when I took an unpremeditated header into sleepland. The hot, bleaching sun smote in white heat upon the limed walls of the houses opposite, and glared back across the road, but the veranda was fairly cool,

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and I slept the tired sleep of a man who has wrestled with fate and been thrown.

My cheroot had dropped from my teeth, and cheerfully plunged its red nose in my jaharn coat, burning a hole like the entrance of a twelve-bore.

Something woke me. There was a saturnalia of crows on, and two syces out on the road were having a fierce wordy battle, but that was not what had awakened me; those noises are too familiar in India—they wake no one; it must have been something else. I kept my eyes closed, and listened drowsily.

Ah! there it was. There could be no doubt about it—my sporting ear caught a low-toned conversation which was being carried on in the veranda. I went right on sleeping. I knew I was asleep, for I heard one of the men say so presently.

"Don't talk so loud, Gomez," an English voice said, "that chap in the chair will hear you if you don't take a pull at that siren voice of yours."

"He's too far *that* side," replied Gomez, in orthodox chee-chee.

Then I slept heavier—I snored.

"Now, don't you make any mistake about gettin' the money on," continued the English voice. "Labby Boy is fit to do the trick without turnin' a hair; and besides, I *ride him*, you see, an' I'll

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take care they never get near me. 'I've been put in to make the runnin', an' I'll make it, too, an' don't you forget it"; and he chuckled softly to himself, like a parrot who has whistled up the hired man.

"Oh, Lor'! Gomez, when I get out on Labby Boy you'll see runnin' that'll break the hearts of the heavy-weights behind. I know Lord Dick's form. He'll say, 'Tim, make the runnin' as long an' as fast as you can, to cut down the field, for Problem's lazy, an'll need drawin' out to do the trick at the finish.' That's what Lord Dick'll say, Gomez; an' Tim'll say, 'All right, My Lord!' an' he'll go out an' make the runnin' so long an' so fast that you, Gomez, an' Tim'll take home to Mangypore a barrel of ducats."

He chuckled again, and Gomez said "Sh-h-h!"

I could feel Tim brace up and listen, and I snored with a diplomatic precision which conveyed the impression that I had a certain time to sleep, and was going to do it.

I knew the riddle. Labby Boy and Problem were both in Lord Dick's stable, though Labby Boy was running in Captain Cook's name. They were both in the Bagdad Plate to be run that day. On form it would be a close thing between Problem and Young Jawan, belonging to the Raja of Bhagalpur.

Tim Doyle was one of the best jockeys in India,

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and from what he had said he meant winning on Labby Boy, who would be a rank outsider. Tim was a good judge, making few mistakes, and I felt that by industriously snoring until the plot was properly hatched I should be able to give up the idea of walking back to Mugabad. I slept with an earnest vigor, and prayed that I might not cough or sneeze.

"Here, take these," I heard Tim say; and the soft rustle of crisp rupee notes came to my ears as they were transferred to the half-caste's hands. "Just keep your eyes open, an' your mouth shut, an' when you see it 20 to 1 just nibble a bit here an' there; don't give it away by bein' too anxious. Get the money all on, an' sit tight. They'll never suspect you of knowin' anythin' about the gee-gees."

A gharry crawled up to the veranda; the strong-voiced driver ceased to urge the ponies, and they stopped, without coaxing—just stopped. Tim and his friend, the half-caste, got in, the gharry-wallah poured a volley of chronological abuse into the flapping ears of the hide-bound *tats* harnessed to the old trap, there was a flack, flack of the whip, the variously dished wheels meandered in and out, and the gharry disappeared in the white heat up the roadway.

Then I awoke. I, too, took a gharry to the

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race-course; it was too hot to hurry, so I took the gharry.

Ordinarily I should have taken an interest in the game little Arab ponies—silver-gray, golden-chestnut, and blood bays, as they fought it out on that beautiful green-sward track with its three-quarter mile straight run-in, but that day my business was with the bookies. Fate had whispered in my ear, and my mission was to do up the Philistines.

I watched three races from the paddock and the stand enclosure. Complacently I saw sanguine men, loaded to the brim with knowledge of good things to be pulled off, come and lay their silver tribute at the feet of the despoiling criers of odds. I made no move about Labby Boy. I knew better than to forestall Tim and his friend.

Then the race for the Bagdad Plate was on the boards—that was Labby Boy's race. Six Arabs went out to try conclusions. The knowing ones said that four of them might as well have remained in the stables, the race lay between Problem and Young Jawan. They had met before down at the Calcutta Meet, and Young Jawan had won; but now Problem was in better condition, and Lord Dick thought that he would turn the tables on the Raja.

A tall bookmaker, nicknamed "The Parson,"

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commenced business by yelling "6 to 4 the field." A quiet small man with a blond mustache and blue eyes stepped up to him and whispered something. The Parson frowned, and gulped a little as he swallowed the bitter pill of the big bet that had been laid him.

"All right, my lord," he said, with an attempt at good grace, "but I'd rather lay you the half of it. I'll never get round on the book."

Lord George smiled incredulously; The Parson rubbed out the 6 to 4 from his board opposite Problem, and chalked 4 to 5 in its place. That was enough for the crowd. They drove like sheep to the other bookmakers to back Problem. He was evidently the pea.

In a second all the boards had changed; the legend ran: "4 to 5 Problem, 2 to 1 Young Jawan and any odds you like the others."

I watched the small, quiet man in gray go down the line of bookmakers. Lord Dick was having a plunge. An army of small bettors followed him, and soon Problem was backed off the boards. All the money was for these two—Problem and Young Jawan.

I stood close to The Parson's stand. I felt sure Gomez would make his first plunge there. It seemed a queer sort of business though. If Labby Boy was fit to do the trick why did not Lord Dick

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know it. He and his friends were piling their money on the stable companion Problem—also Problem was always supposed to be the better horse of the two.

But reasoning in horse racing is bad business—it's the sort of thing that breaks a man. It's what the little men who sit on top of the horses say *will* be, that is going to be. It costs money to find that sort of thing out, but had I not spent money—had I not thought of walking back to Mugabad? So I let reason go to the dogs, and watched for a half-caste with bank-notes for Labby Boy.

Presently I saw Gomez edge up to where The Parson was landing his fish.

I did not catch what Gomez said, but I heard The Parson say, "Yes, 20 to 1; and he's a dead-sure winner. Twenty thousand to one I'll lay you, just twice"; and he looked as solemn as a judge at the simple half-caste. I could see that his soul was watering for the couple of hundred he hoped to rake in from the man from the jungles.

Gomez hesitatingly handed up two rasping new hundred rupee notes, and I left him with The Parson to arrange details.

I hastened over to a little bookmaker with a hooked nose who had fattened off Shahzada's sluggish speed. In his satchel was much money of mine, and my immediate business was with

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him. He smiled sardonically when I backed Labby Boy with him, and chaffed me with gratuitous freedom. "Did Lord Dick give you the tip?" he asked solicitously, "or did you have a dream? You've always got something good up your sleeve for the last day, but don't give it away, or the people will break me," he said.

My money had increased his happiness, for Lord Dick had backed Problem with him, and Lord Dick was the length of the British Empire from being a fool. The money that Gomez and I put on Labby Boy was like a drop in the bucket, it changed the odds very little.

I went up and sat in the grand stand, for I thought I should like to see this thing, of which I had no understanding.

The Bagdad Plate was a mile and a half, so the horses were starting from just beyond the stand. Arab horses are always gentlemen, even at the starting post, so there was little trouble over getting them well away. Silver Tail, Lord Caperton's horse, cut out the pace at a clinking gait. Soon a nice bit of scenery showed between him and the others. Lord Dick smiled as he gazed through the open vista. That also was part of the program, for Silver Tail was in the same stable with Problem and Labby Boy, and all the money of this nice family party had been piled on Prob-

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lem. It was all fair enough—he was the only one in the lot that could beat Young Jawan, the owners thought; and there was no use backing horses that were beaten before they started.

Labby Boy was lying next; and behind raced Problem and Young Jawan together.

The jockey on Problem had orders to lie back with Young Jawan, and come away at the finish and beat him.

Silver Tail had obeyed orders so industriously that at the three-quarters he was done for. Then Labby Boy went on and took up the running.

Lord Dick looked around and saw me standing just behind. "Have you got anything on him?" he asked.

"Yes, quite a bit," I replied, discreetly.

He smiled approvingly. "You're all right, he'll win in a walk," he said, thinking of Problem.

"I hope so," I added, with my mind on Labby Boy.

"The boy is riding to orders beautifully," he continued, looking through his glasses at the small figure sitting on Problem.

"He's doing that," I replied, my eyes many yards ahead on Tim, as he crouched over the withers of Labby Boy.

At the mile Labby Boy had a long lead: at the mile and a quarter it was longer. People began

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to look grave. Why didn't Jockey Bung shake Problem up? Why didn't he come away? But those were his orders—to stay behind with Young Jawan.

When they turned into the straight Labby Boy still had a tremendous lead. The others were coming now, fast, fast, and faster. Problem and Young Jawan were racing neck and neck, the jockeys were straining every nerve. The beautiful Arabs, dark bays both of them, were galloping side by side like two brothers; a blanket would have covered both of them.

It was the race of a lifetime; nose and nose they raced; low to the ground they thundered along.

But the other—Labby Boy! Would they catch him?

Lord Dick's face was serious enough now. I heard him swear softly behind his blond mustache. "My God! Look at Labby Boy," I heard a voice at my elbow exclaim. "The very devil's in the horse. He's running away with Tim!"

And so it seemed. It looked as though Tim were trying to come back to his horses now. Of course he could not take a direct pull at him, for Labby Boy and Problem were running under different owners' names, though they were really in the same interest—Lord Dick's.

Nine out of every ten of the men in that stand

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had their money on either Problem or Young Jawan, and the fact that the two favorites were considerably behind in the procession was a source of unmistakable misery to the nine-tenths. Some blasphemed gently, but it made no difference to the horses, Labby Boy and Tim persistently pushed themselves into the recognition of the despondent watchers.

At the distance Problem and Young Jawan were still neck and neck, and the outsider, Labby Boy, who had made all the running, and should have been beaten off moons ago, according to all the ethics of racing, was still in the lead—several lengths in the lead.

And so they flashed by the stand, Labby Boy lasting out to get home in front, with Problem drawing into second place, a half length in front of Young Jawan.

Then a great silence settled over the stand. There was nobody to cheer—nothing to cheer about.

Gomez did not care about glory, it was the money he was after, and was already pushing his way diligently down toward The Parson.

I—I had nothing to say.

Lord Dick's face was a study—his manner that of a man who was not pleased. He stood on the steps of the stand just by the weighing scales, and

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said with Anglo-Saxon directness, "No more damn Tim Doyle for me!" But that was his way.

When Tim came to weigh in there was a scene, for though Lord Dick was a good loser, he was the last man in the world to stand being thrown down.

"I only obeyed orders, my lord," said Tim. "My orders were to take up the running from Silver Tail, an' make it as far an' as strong as I could. That's what I did, an' if the others hadn't loafed, they'd a caught us."

And for days there was the mysterious tale told by an unbelieved bookie of a simple half-caste who had blundered on to the good thing, and won a pile of money over Labby Boy's accidental win.

HONORS EASY



Honors Easy

IT was quite lawful to sell Lieutenant Doyne a pup. It was also easy; that was because he was a "Griffin"—the greenest kind of a "Griffin." Nature had cut him out for an innocent boy, and his mother had never allowed the pattern to get out of shape.

It was not particularly witty to call him "The Cherub," but it was fairly appropriate.

Also at Hokeypoorey, that's where the regiment was stationed when he came out to join; things were different from what they were at Bally-cum-jerry, in dear old Ireland.

But he took his troubles as lightly as an Irish hunter takes stone fences; the result was that the seniors were kept busy finding new things for him to discover.

"He'll niver be aisy till he slays a tiger," said Captain Mahone. "The bhoy is foriver talking about his shooting, and how he'd loike to lay out Mashter Sthripes."

"That means, I suppose," drawled Herbert, "that we'll have to get a tiger for him to *shikar*."

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It seemed rather a tall order, for there wasn't a tiger within three hundred miles of Hokey-poorey easy; but the other chaps in the Mess did not bother their heads much about the little matter of distance, for they knew that Herbert would fix up the *shikar* all right enough, and without saying much more about it either.

It seemed a miraculous coincidence that Buldoo, the *shikari*, should turn up the very next day with a startling tale of devastation from a "man-eater." Ten *kos* out this tiger, "as big as a bullock, sahib, and as bloodthirsty as a head-hunting hillman," was eating up men and cattle beyond all count.

It was Doyne's chance. His predecessors there in Hokeypoorey were satiated with the slaying of tigers. Of course they would help him; weren't they always helping him? But for the sake of his mother, who was Mahone's cousin, should he have first crack at "Master Stripes."

It was like getting up a lottery on the *Gymkhana* sports, it was so smoothly and so easily done. Buldoo would arrange for a kill, for a bait, out at the ten *kos* place, and they would go that night and be ready for business in the early morning. He was an early bird, was this tiger, getting up for his *chota hazree* at daylight, and surely might the sahib bag him just when the crows commenced to call to the breaking day.

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Half a dozen of the fellows went with Doyne to see fair play between him and the tiger; as sort of beaters, they explained. Not that they took any interest in the killing of the tiger—they had outgrown that—grown weary of it.

So, instead of turning in that night, when the business of the evening was over—when whist, billiards, and gup had been settled for another twenty-four hours—they took to horse and hied them over the ten *kos*.

Buldoo was there when they arrived and explained to Herbert the plan of campaign.

The bait had been placed down in a hollow, or sort of low-lying field, which gave them a good chance to steal upon their game.

Toward daylight, under the guidance of Buldoo, they worked their way along to this place.

“Now we’ll have to crawl up this slope on our stomachs, like Indians stealing upon a foe,” said Herbert to Doyne; and, suiting the action to the word, he got down and commenced to wriggle along like a snake in the grass, followed by The Cherub.

The Cherub thought the crawling would never come to an end; it seemed as though he had really gone about four miles; but he could stand it if the others could, he thought, so he said nothing but kept crawling.

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After a time they got to the top of the incline up which they had been wriggling. Herbert put out his hand and stopped him. Then he pointed down in the hollow straight ahead of him.

There was just gray enough coming up the eastern sky for him to see the tiger.

"Don't miss him," whispered Herbert, as Doyne levelled his "Express."

He waited until the light got a little better—until he could see the sights on his rifle. As he looked over the barrel, he could just make out the fierce brute tearing at the bait.

He took a long, careful aim—it was wonderful how long it took him to get a bead on the undulating form of the huge beast as it tore at the yearling heifer that had been placed there as a bait. It was nerves; he had thought that he should be wondrous steady, but he was nearly going to pieces. For the thousandth part of a second the sights lined up against the dark body of the animal. With a spasmodic clutch he pulled the trigger.

Above the noise of his rifle he could hear the roar of the wounded tiger, for he had bowled him over.

"Better give him another one," said Herbert quickly; and he did.

They were joined by the other fellows as they rushed down.

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"Damn you, Herbert!" was all The Cherub said when they stood at the side of the slain animal—it was a jackass, just a common little jackass, tied to a stake in the ground.

Then sorrowfully, as men returning from a funeral, they wended their way back over that ten *kos*, and Doyne knew that for many days there would be food for cheerful banter in Hokey-poorey.

It was felt that a great thing had been done; it would be sacrilege to perpetrate any commonplace joke upon Doyne for some time to come. He was, as it were, made free of the city.

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By one of those peculiar chances of fortune which give into the hands of the innocent that for which the wise struggle, The Cherub had become possessed of a really fast pony. It was not his fault; it was not judgment of pace, or make, or any other qualification under heaven—nothing but simply cooley-headed luck.

He had bought an Arab polo pony for eight hundred rupees from Abdul Rahman in Bombay, and lo! it had turned out a cracking good gee-gee.

He had tried to give him a classical name, but from the first the pony was known as Vaseline;

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that was because Doyne slipped from his back so easily at first.

Doyne also took no small satisfaction from the fact that Vaseline could slip away from the other ponies in a race just as easily.

Then came the two day's "Sky Races," with Vaseline barred from all but the two "open events."

These were considered a gift for Doyne's speedy little horse; but all the same, he would have to have something to run for to pay his corn bill; besides, the fellows would all get their money back when Vaseline was sent up to Lucknow, in February, to run among the "good uns."

Doyne was training Vaseline himself, which was proof positive that the pony must be a cracker if he could win in any company with training such as he got.

Of course, as there weren't many strangers coming to the small meet at Hokeypoorey, of a necessity the regiment was a house divided against itself; each brother officer with a bit up his sleeve, and a hopeful idea that somehow or other he would come out on the right side on settling day over the lotteries.

It was Herbert's pony, Curry Boy, that was dead lame the day before the races commenced.

The Cherub saw him limping as he came

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back from his morning gallop, and in consequence laid a tidy few of the depreciated rupees against his winning the race he was favored for.

But Doyne himself would have gone a bit lame if he'd had as tight a yellow bandage around his foreleg as Curry Boy was wearing. But he didn't know that; all he knew was that it was a good thing to lay two to one against his chances of winning.

Of course he won. When a man takes the trouble to put a tight bandage around a horse's leg he has a rosy chance of winning sure.

Herbert might have told him about it, but then The Cherub was always jumping at conclusions, like a true-born Irishman, and paddling about in the mulligatawny in consequence.

To the astonishment of everybody Vaseline did not start in the Hokeypoorey Cup; that was the open event for the first day.

It rather spoiled the fun, for the pony from Bildad galloped away from all the home ponies—"made common hacks of them," as Mahone said.

"Don't know what the youngster's up to," said Herbert. "He threw away a clean thousand rupees over not starting Vaseline."

"Bottling him up for the second day," was the general verdict; and each one, individually, made

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a solemn vow to have a piece of him in the lotteries. If they could only keep his quality from Archer, the little bookmaker, who had run up for the meet, they might do a bit of Christian work with him, too, by relieving him of much of the root of evil.

The night before the second day's racing The Cherub was late getting down to the lotteries.

The first lottery on the Bagdad Plate—that was Vaseline's race—was just being sold.

Vaseline was selling favorite. From fifty rupee down to ten rupee bids the pony had travelled until he was bid up to over 800 rupees, in a thousand-rupee lottery.

"What nonsense," said The Cherub, angrily, for the horse had been knocked down to someone just as he entered the room; "what nonsense! Why the horse isn't worth more than that. I'd sell him just as he is for that much."

"I'll take him!" shouted Herbert, rushing across eagerly to where The Cherub stood. "Here! all you fellows heard Doyme offer to sell the horse at 800 rupees and I take him."

"I don't want to sell him," said The Cherub, doggedly, flushing red at being taken up so quickly.

"Oh, come, that won't do," said Herbert. "All the chaps here heard you offer him for that,

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and now I'll give you my I. O. U. for the eight hundred and claim the horse.

"I'll tell you what it is, captain; the horse isn't worth it, and I don't want to sell him to you, but if you stick me to it you can take him just as he is. Mind, I don't give any guarantee about him in any shape or form."

It was a glorious opportunity. The Cherub was always doing stupid things, but this was the climax. Captain Herbert gave him the I. O. U., and the horse was his.

"Mind," said The Cherub, "you'll have to send up for him, for you've taken delivery of him now; I'm not going to send him down to you—unless you want to back out of your bargain, and leave him where he is."

"What a queer Griffin it is," said Herbert. "A bargain's a bargain, and I'll send up for him in the morning."

"No, you'd better send to-night," said The Cherub, in a quiet, drawling sort of way.

"Why can't he stop there till morning?" asked the captain.

"Because he's dead," gently remarked The Cherub; "and I don't like to have a dead horse in my stable so long."

An ominous silence fell over the lottery room.

The Cherub, feeling perhaps that a little ex-

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planation was necessary, said: "He put his foot in a hole when I was giving him a final gallop this evening, and snapped his leg like a pipe stem. I didn't mean to sell him, though," he added, with that same tantalizing drawl, "until Captain Herbert rushed me into it. I was just going to tell you fellows to withdraw him from the lotteries when I came in, but I was too late to stop his being put up."

Then they remembered the tiger hunt, and various matters, and fell to wondering just what it would cost Herbert to get out of it.

It was too bad though about Vaseline, for he was dead right enough—stone dead.

BY GRACE OF CHANCE

By Grace of Chance

LIEUTENANT LAYTON had a friend, and the friend had peculiarities. One of the peculiarities was an absorbing love of getting into debt and consequent kite-flying. It's as easy to get into debt in India as it is to get into sunshine. He was known by the cheerful name of "Gaiety."

With Lieutenant Layton's name on the back of a note and his friend's on the face of it it was an easy hunt to stalk a Marwarie money-lender with cash enough to discount it. But that transaction didn't really help them very much. It tided the friend over settling day after Bungaloo races, but it didn't provide the ways and means against settling day with the Marwarie.

With nothing tangible in sight, chances had to be taken, and one or two little flyers on the part of Gaiety had only worked them down deeper in the debt mire.

That was why Layton was wandering about on the maidan close to the Lucknow race-course one evening when he should have been at the "gym"

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or the "Mess," or almost anywhere except mooning about on the dismal, smoke-scented plain.

He was doing something that no officer in the whole service would have given him credit for—he was fretting.

The friend who had used up the money, and who would most likely come a-smash if the thing wasn't met, was enjoying himself with his brother officers as though he hadn't a minute to spare from the arduous duty of spending his income.

"It's a devil of a hole that we're in," mused Layton, as he flicked at the dry grass with his stick. "Gaiety can't raise the wind, not a *pice* of it, to pay that blood-sucking Marwarie, and he'll be down on me for his pound of flesh like an Afghan Ghazi. I wouldn't care, only poor old Nell will have to wait till God knows when—wait till never-day, I fancy, for the infernal thing will break me too."

He threw up his head and listened. Something was pounding the turf behind him on the course. It was not the mixed, excited shuffle of ekka ponies; it was the clean, powerful stroke of thoroughbred hoofs, strong horses hammering the sod in eager gallop—his racing ear knew that.

"By Jove, it's a trial!" he muttered.

He could see a blurred mass gliding along in the moonlight on the far side of the course. He

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quicken his pace and drew up in the shadow of the lime-plastered grand stand.

Two men were standing at the "finish post," twenty yards past the stand. In the uncertain light he could not distinguish who they were.

The Marwarie and Gaiety slipped from his mind for an instant, and his sporting blood bounded hot through his veins in the excitement of watching the horses race neck and neck up the stretch.

It was a glorious tussle. "They're riding for blood," he muttered. "It's no blind, this trial."

Two horses were hugging each other like twins; behind, a dozen lengths, beaten off, galloped something that had been put in to make the running.

As they smashed past Layton, one, a big bay, shot out as though the jockey had just let his head go, and swung between the "finish post" and the judges' stand a clean length in front of his mate.

It was pure sport that made Layton take so much interest in the dash up to that time. "The bay could have galloped over the other fellow at any time," he thought. "I wonder who he belongs to."

Just then a high-pitched, drawling voice came up to him from one of the two men. There could be no mistaking it. That voice was known from one end to the other of the military racing world

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of India—it belonged to Captain Frank Jocelyn. He was saying: “By Gad, Dick, he’ll do for the big handicap, if they don’t smother him with weight. Two stun and a beating to the other!”

Layton hurried away, his brain in a whirl. He was like a man who had picked up a diamond of great value and was afraid of finding the owner.

It was all clear enough. The bay was Frank Jocelyn’s Zigzag, with the captain’s jockey, Dick Richmond, in the saddle.

He remembered the horse perfectly now.

Frank Jocelyn was one of the cleverest racing men in India. His knowledge had cost him something, for to have a free hand at the game he had resigned his commission in the Ninth Hussars. If the trial had satisfied him that Zigzag was good enough for the “open handicap,” there could be very little doubt about it whatever.

Layton realized what it meant. It was the very softest kind of a snap.

With this knowledge he could back the horse for more than enough to pay off Gaiety’s debts with the Marwarie.

But it would be hardly honorable toward Jocelyn. He had blundered upon the captain’s secret; almost stolen it. He could scarcely do it.

Then, on the other hand, the greasy, covetous face of the money-lender peered at him from the

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thick folds of a peepul tree and sneeringly asked why the sahibs signed notes they could not pay.

It meant ruin and shame and all the rest of it, and even the face of his friend, Gaiety—all the happy boyishness gone—was there in the evening dusk, drawn and white and pleading.

It was a bitter struggle, for Layton had honor—plenty of it; but the odds were too great; he could not fight against it; and, besides, Jocelyn had not confided in him, had not trusted him, had not put him upon his honor. It was his luck that he had seen the trial. Fate had drawn him there to show him a way out of his difficulty.

Also, if he bought Zigzag in the lotteries Jocelyn could claim half every time. They could both win quite enough, for the lotteries would be very heavy.

This was the day before the opening of the Lucknow Spring Meeting.

It was the next morning that Frank Jocelyn was walking home from the course, after having seen his string exercised, when he was stopped by one Harvey, trainer to the Raja of Jagnat.

"Good-mornin', Meester Jocelyn," began Harvey; and in his manner was much of the I've-got-something-behind-all-this style.

"What is it, Harvey?" said Jocelyn, scenting the something at once.

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"Well, sir, you know Simpkin, don't you?"

"Is he any good?" asked Jocelyn. "He's never done anything yet."

"That's hall right, sir," answered the trainer, with a wink, "hand 'e's in the big 'andicap here—the same race as your Zigzag's in."

"Well?" queried Jocelyn.

"The 'andicapper don't know much about 'im 'ere, sir, hand if you 'appened to be hanywhere near when the weights was bein' made hup, and could get a tidy weight hon 'im, we could land the stuff."

"What weight'll do you?" asked the owner of Zigzag.

"Hanything hunder eight stun seven. With eight stun four on 'is back, he could gallop right away from the hothers."

Then Harvey explained to the captain all about the trials Simpkin had given them down at Jagnat; how he had beaten horses that quite outclassed Zigzag, until Jocelyn saw that, with a light weight on his back, there certainly was nothing in it but Simpkin.

He knew that Zigzag, on his past form, would certainly not get less than nine stone seven pound in the handicap, perhaps ten stone.

This was a game after his own heart. They could make a coup with Simpkin, and Zigzag would have less weight another time.

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Besides, Zigzag would fetch a pretty good price in the lotteries, and it would take a lot of money to back him to win a fair amount. That would be too risky if Simpkin were as good as Harvey said. said.

"You can buy our 'orse in hevery lottery," said the trainer, "hand we'll take 'alf or three-quarters, just as you like. He'll never be backed 'eavily, for nobody but the stable knows nout about 'im."

Always when things of this sort happen the recipient of the favor credits it to fate. That's just what the captain did. "The gods are bound to thrust this purse in my pocket," he mused, as he travelled down the tree-shaded road toward a big white bungalow.

And Fate laughed a little and went to sleep again, for she was not to act, really, till the day of the race.

Jocelyn knew that three officers were framing the handicaps that very morning in Major Jim's bungalow.

He didn't quite know how he was going to get a hand in the business, but if he could make any excuse to get in among them something was pretty sure to turn up.

When he stepped up on the veranda the rough dark-green door of the bungalow was closed. He gave a knock and shoved it abruptly open and

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walked in, pretending to be mighty surprised at finding anybody but his friend, Major Jim, there.

"Awfully sorry, gentlemen," he exclaimed, in his lazy, drawling way. "Had no idea that I was spoiling sport. My dog-cart didn't turn up at the race-course, and I thought I'd come in and have breakfast with the major. I'll clear out, though, and let you finish up your work."

"Have a peg, Jocelyn?" said Major Jim, getting up from the table. "We are busy, and breakfast won't be on till we finish. Sorry I can't ask you to stay in the room, but we're making the handicaps, you know."

"I say, you fellows," exclaimed one of the others, as the captain sipped leisurely at his whiskey and soda, "Jocelyn likely knows something about this Simpkin they've sent up from Jagnat. He knows every gee-gee in the country."

"Yes," added the major; "what about this brute Harvey has entered for Jagnat? We've got none of his performances to go on."

"Oh, that crock," said the captain, with fine scorn; "stick a postage stamp on his back—shove him in at anything you like, seven stun ten. Good-morning, gentlemen," he added, as he set his glass down and opened the door. "Don't put a load of bricks on Zigzag's back."

As he walked away from his bungalow he whis-

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tled softly under his breath. "May I fall in love with Kali if ever I saw a chance to beat that."

When the handicap was posted that evening on the notice board on the course Zigzag had the rather heavy impost of ten stone, while Simpkin had a weight to gladden Harvey's heart; he was in at eight stone.

Harvey assured Jocelyn that the horse couldn't lose at that weight.

To make the good thing a greater certainty, Jocelyn let the trainer have his jockey, Richmond, for Simpkin, and determined to ride Zigzag himself.

If the game had been Zigzag, this would not have mattered so very much, for he was one of the best riders in India.

That the owner was riding Zigzag confirmed Layton in his determination to have a plunge on the horse.

At the lotteries, the night before the race, Layton bought Zigzag in the first lottery.

When the secretary asked if the owner claimed anything Johnson answered, "Nothing, thanks."

"He'll come to me after it's all over," thought Layton, "and ask for a half throughout. He knows I'll have to give it to him, too. It wouldn't be safe to have his horse running with none of the owner's money on."

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When Simpkin was sold Jocelyn bought him through another party.

And so it was through every lottery, and there were many of them, for the handicap was a big betting race with eight horses in it.

Layton bought Zigzag steadily every time, and Jocelyn's agent took Simpkin.

After it was over Layton rather wondered that Zigzag's owner made no sign—did not come and ask for his half.

He could understand Jocelyn's refusal to take any interest in him in the lotteries, for the effect of that was to reduce his betting price. But why did he not come forward now, when it was all over?

"He'll come around in the morning," he thought. "He won't let him run unbacked after that trial."

But in the morning Jocelyn still made no sign. Layton was getting a little uneasy. Racing was such an uncertain business at best. What if something had gone wrong with Zigzag? He would be utterly ruined if he failed to win the race. Not only the Marwarie's debt, but the present lottery account. He would be posted as a defaulter; at least, it would take every rupee he could rake together in the world to square up, and he would certainly have to send in his papers.

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Fifteen minutes before the race no offer had come from Jocelyn to take a share in Zigzag's chances. The suspense was too great for Layton.

He went to the little dressing-room, just under the stand, where Jocelyn was putting on his slim riding-boots and colors.

"See here, Frank," he said, "I've got Zigzag in every lottery, and I stand to win a big pot over him—20,000 at least. Do you want any of it? You haven't a bit of it yet."

Jocelyn was noted for two things—his superb riding and his exquisite cynical humor.

"Who the merry Hades told you to back my horse?" he asked.

"I backed him because I thought he could win, and you were riding him," answered Layton, coloring slightly.

"Well, he hasn't the ghost of a chance," said Jocelyn, tightening the strings in his racing cap, "and I don't want a bit of him in anything. He hasn't a thousand to one chance."

Layton was dumfounded.

"If he doesn't win," he said, "I shall come a cropper."

Jocelyn looked at him queerly for a minute; then he said: "Now go and square yourself on Simpkin. You can hedge on him, for he's a sure winner."

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"And if he's beaten," said Layton, almost angrily, "I shall be in a worse hole than ever. I won't do it. I'll stand or fall by Zigzag, and I'll lay you 5,000 rupees to nothing against his winning."

"I won't do it that way," said Jocelyn, quickly, "for that isn't a bet. If I can't lose I can't win; that's the rule in betting, but I'll take 5,000 rupees to 10."

"Here, Dick," he called, sharply, "you witness this bet. Mr. Layton lays me 5,000 rupees to 10 against Zigzag. If the horse wins he pays me 5,000, if he doesn't I pay him 10. That's a clear understanding, isn't it?"

"Yes," answered Layton, cheerfully.

"It's the only bet I've got on my mount," added Jocelyn, "and it's just throwing 10 rupees in the sea."

As they rode over to the post Jocelyn said to Dick: "I'll carry them along for you half a mile, for with your light weight it will be better for something to make the running. When I'm done for, you can go to the front and canter home. I think you'll have an easy job."

"I'd rather be on Zigzag, sir," replied the jockey. "I know what he can do, and I don't like the feel of this fellow under me; he's shifty."

The race was a mile and a quarter. As the

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horses made their way over to the starting post across the course from the stand, Gaiety came up to Layton and said: "There's a tremendous rush on Simpkin."

And so there was. The stable money being all on, Harvey had told a few of his friends, and the ring was flooding the bookmakers with money for Simpkin.

Very few were backing Zigzag, and he was travelling out in the betting.

"Ten to one, Zigzag!" the bookmakers were howling in vain—there were no takers.

At the start Jocelyn was playing to get away in front to make the running and keep a nice place for Simpkin to drop into when his horse was beaten.

At the third attempt they got away, very much as the captain desired.

"They're off!" went up from the grand stand in a hoarse cry, and glasses were levelled at the bright splashes of color twisting in and out, as the eight horses scrambled for places.

A black jacket, with red and yellow sleeves, shot to the front immediately.

"Zigzag leads," somebody exclaimed, and Layton rubbed his glasses with his handkerchief, and focused them on the leader of the rushing troop.

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He could see the red and yellow quartered cap leaning far over the withers of the big bay. Yes, it was Zigzag.

"He's got away well," said Layton to Gaiety without lowering his glasses. "He's trying anyway, and if it comes to *any* brain work at the finish, Jocelyn can give all the boys seven pounds at that game."

When they had travelled a quarter of a mile the black jacket was a length in front of everything. Layton's heart lay like lead in his breast. Those were not Jocelyn's tactics when he was out to win a mile-and-a-quarter race. With ten stone up he wouldn't be making his own running.

Layton knew then that he had lost. It was almost a relief to know just where he stood. He had cast the die and lost.

Some fool near him was croaking, "Zigzag'll win all the way." He felt pity in his heart for the man's utter ignorance of racing. Perhaps, though, after all, it were better that way; he almost envied him. It was the knowledge of racing that broke so many of them.

At the three-quarters Zigzag was still leading.

"He'll win! he'll win!" the other man was saying, exultingly. "I took 10 to 1 about him."

Then something crept up on Zigzag—crept up until the horses were lapped head and head. The

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glasses showed the white jacket and red cap of the Jagnat's stable.

"Simpkin is coming now!" went up a cry from many throats—the throats of the many who had backed him when the tip was spread about.

At the half-mile Simpkin's Arab head showed in front. The two were a clear length in front of the field.

The stand was wild with delight, for Simpkin had started favorite.

Over on the horses Jocelyn and Dick were riding so close together that they could speak in short, gasping words as the wind cut at their breath.

Three furlongs from home they were together, nose and nose—Simpkin had dropped back a head.

Jocelyn could hear something closing up on them from behind.

"Go on, Dick!" he gasped. "I'll pull back and let you up next the rail."

"I can't," answered Dick, helplessly. "I can't go any faster; I'm done for."

A great rage came into the heart of the captain. This was the "sure thing" they had put him on to. Beaten a quarter of a mile from the finish, and the others closing up on them. Already a chestnut head was lapped on the quarters of Simpkin.

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Zigzag was still full of running, fighting for his head. Slowly, inch by inch, the chestnut was creeping up. His nose was at Dick's girths now.

"I'm done," he heard Dick say again, and then he gripped the saddle with his knees and rode for Layton's 5,000 rupees.

A furlong from home he was clear of Simpkin, but the chestnut was still there, lapped on his quarters now, and beside the chestnut, on the outside, was an iron gray, coming very fast, too.

How he cursed the folly that had made him take so much out of Zigzag to make the running for Simpkin.

If the gallant old horse would only last home the 5,000 rupees would pay his losses.

In the stand the cry of "Zigzag wins!" went up as the horses clung to each other up the stretch.

Layton was tugging at his blond mustache, and even Gaiety's face was solemn and still as he realized what that struggle meant to the two of them—meant more to them than to all the others in the stand together. Not only the money, but honor—life itself was at stake.

As they flashed past the stand Zigzag's big, bony head with its wide, red nostrils, was still in front

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And so they caught the judge's eye.

The stout heart of the gallant horse and the cool head of the steel-nerved rider had won the race that was all but thrown away.



THE LUCK OF THE BABE



The Luck of the Babe

WHEN the other fellows in the 100th Hussars bestowed upon Harry Tobyn the artless name of "Babe" they considered that, with full regard to his exuberant innocence, they had let him down with a gentle solicitude worthy of the Mess. So anyone may see what a pleasing vista of coolie-headed entanglements was opened up by the advent of "Babe" Tobyn.

If he had sulked about it he would have stepped right into hard training for any trying condition of affairs that might have awaited him in a future state. But he had just the most beautifully oiled temper that ever ran smoothly in any piece of human mechanism.

They drew him and made use of him; they drove cholera out of the camp at Cocowan to the fife and drum of the Babe's laughter; and to the laughter that came from his exploit with an elephant. The elephant had ideas, as they always have, and so had the Babe—sometimes. The result was that men who were buried at ten o'clock the next day laughed that day.

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But this is a story of the Babe and three horses, not of an elephant.

Bear in mind that Tobyn was in the first flush of the glamor of life in India. The ethics of betting, the subtle uncertainty of racing, the perplexing art of knowing just what to do at the right moment were all tumbling in upon him with the cyclonic violence of a southwest monsoon. He would survive, of course—at least he probably would; but in the meantime he was in a magic labyrinth of tortuous experiences. But he had money, and he shovelled it in.

Well, the three horses were Amir, Rocket, and Pegu. Not one of them belonged to Tobyn; they belonged to men who could almost do the "Mango-tree trick." Their names were John, James, and Henry, as they say in the school-books, which will do very well for this tale.

They were all entered in the "Railway Plate"—the horses, of course—and men said the betting mill would be a big one—between Amir and Rocket, particularly.

The "Railway Plate" was a mile on the flat, a distance which suited both horses. Pegu was supposed to lie down and roll over after he had gone a half-mile, for that was his limit—five furlongs at the very outside.

The terms of the race called for three starters;

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and that was really why Pegu had been put in. He was, as it were, a subsidized interest; and, being a forlorn runner, a native jockey was thought good enough to pilot him, and much cheaper.

That's what Henry, his owner, thought; so he put up Abdul, little better than a stable boy, who only knew enough to sit in the saddle and let the horse use his own discretion—which, after all, is not such a very bad thing.

Before the race, John, the owner of Amir, took counsel with himself. It would be a near thing between his horse and Rocket—either might win. He could not depend on Amir's winning, but he could upon Rocket's; in fact, he quite convinced himself that Rocket had much the best chance; so, through a friend, he backed the other man's horse heavily. It was a thoroughly sound enterprise, based on obvious principles.

James was not so sure about Rocket winning as was his friend John. He had uneasy qualms about the horse. What if Amir could stay the mile? He was certainly faster than Rocket. It was too risky; he would back the better horse, Amir. So he sent a trusty henchman, who loaded up the willing "Bookies" with bets on John's horse Amir.

It was a generous thing to do, this backing of each other's horses; an unselfish thing; and they

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hid their good under a bushel, did not let the right hand know what the left was doing—said not a word to each other.

Of course the result of this steady plunge on the part of the owners caused Amir and Rocket to rule close favorites in the betting. It was 6 to 5 on—take your choice. Also because of this, and because he really hadn't a ghost of a chance, Pegu glided out in the betting until he was 20 to 1.

This was a charming sort of arrangement for the Babe to wander up against. He had a happy faculty of finding intricate combinations of this sort; and his supreme indifference to results, and complete faith in his own ability, usually ran him hard and fast on the sunken rock.

When he asked a friend what he should back, the friend blithely answered "Amir—nothing else in it."

That being so, he felt that he must do something substantial, so he had a thousand rupees on the horse. It was an exhilarating start, and he whistled cheerfully as he walked around to the front of the stand.

"You're happy," said Captain Lavel, meeting him on the grass promenade.

"Yes," answered Toby; "I've just backed the winner—that is to be."

"What's the good thing?" asked Lavel.

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"Amir; Grant says he can't lose."

"Now look here," exclaimed Lavel, half angrily, "Grant's an ass. Amir hasn't a thousand to one chance. I know him, for I used to own him. He can't stay the distance; seven-eighths is as far as he can get. He'll crack up a furlong from home at the pace Rocket'll set him."

He looked with angry compassion into the face of Tobyn, and the latter drew the toe of his boot thoughtfully across the grass, making Maltese crosses, as though he would force his thoughts into some sort of shape. Lavel's information had staggered him. What the deuce did Grant mean by putting him on to a horse like that—on to a dead one? Then he remembered that Grant had taken a rise out of him once or twice before.

However, evidently Lavel knew about the runners, so he asked: "What shall I do?"

"Why, go and back Rocket," advised the captain. "Play to get even. Back him for a thousand, or enough to pay your losings over Amir. I shouldn't do any more over this sort of a race if I were you," and he sauntered over to the marquee, for all this talking had made him thirsty.

"This is no end of a fool's game!" muttered the Babe, as he stalked toward the bookmakers to do as his friend had advised. "I can't win, and I'm almost certain to lose a little." He wondered

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why in the world he wasn't clever enough to think of some scheme to score over Grant and the other fellows, who were always putting him on to dead things. The only thing he could do would be to wring some of their necks; but that would be bad form. It meant showing that he had lost his temper because he got a bit the worst of it; and that wouldn't be tolerated in the 100th Hussars. Why the deuce wasn't he clever enough to score? By Jove! it was really aggravating.

Then he backed Rocket for a thousand, and felt that he was pretty well back at the beginning again. However, it was better than losing. He didn't mind the money so much as the known fact of his persistency in never picking a winner.

He was in this irregular frame of mind when Larraby spotted him. "Here's sport," muttered Larraby to himself; and he heliographed a friend, Dixon, to join him.

"What have you backed, Tobyn?" asked Larraby, solicitously.

"Backed them both," answered the Babe, laconically.

"Pegu, and what else?" queried Larraby.

"Pegu be hanged! I haven't touched that crock," he answered, with fine scorn in his voice. "I got on Amir first, thanks to Grant; and then Lavel assured me that he had no chance, and I

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put a thou' on the Rocket to save the Amir money."

"Then you'll be just two thousand out," said Larraby, solemnly; "two thousand of Her Majesty's rupees—won't he, Dixon?"

"Yes," assented the latter, wondering why he should be forced to cover his friend's lie.

"How's that?" asked Tobyn, frowning a look into the face of the complacent Larraby.

"Well, neither owner is backing his horse. I know for a fact, because I've been watching, and that means anything you like. Besides, Pegu can run like a streak of blue lightning. He's got a light weight on his back, and he'll get away from them so far that they'll never catch him in this heavy going."

"You think he'll win, then?" queried Tobyn.

"Win! of course he will; he'll walk in. You'd better put a thousand on him, and make a haul; he's 20 to 1. Have a plunge. At any rate, you'll have backed the three of them then, and must get a winner."

"What did you do that for?" asked Dixon, as they turned away from Tobyn. "You know Pegu was only put in to make up the race."

"Oh, he's fair game," answered Larraby, lightly. "I like to see him dropping his sov's about. I'll tell this down at the Mess to-night,

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how the Babe backed the three horses in the race, and expected to win."

The more Tobyn thought it over, the more it occurred to him that he ought to back Pegu. If he didn't, and the latter won! By Jove! he'd have backed two losers out of three runners. Great Rama! they would laugh at him; he'd never hear the last of it. Also he'd lose two thousand—a thousand over each of the horses. If he backed Pegu also, he could only lose a thousand—he must find a winner, then, as Larraby had said.

Of course if Pegu won, he'd win twenty thousand. By Jove! he'd do it. So he had a thousand on Pegu, at twenty to one.

The bookmaker chuckled softly to himself when he booked the bet. "That's a thousand out of the fire," he said. The other two are running for each other, this is my profit." If the gods would only send him a few more rich young asses like the Babe, he'd soon quit the game.

Then the true fun began; for it was really more comedy than race.

Jockey Blake rode Amir, and Scotty Lewis was on Rocket.

Now bear in mind that Amir's owner had backed Rocket, and Rocket's owner had backed Amir, and that jockeys nearly always receive explicit instructions from their owners before they

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go out, as to how they are to ride the race—always on the square, of course, my masters.

Blake thought that a bad start would suit him capitally; Scotty meant to get away absolutely last; three or four lengths the worst of the start would be a good excuse for getting beaten in the race.

Abdul couldn't understand it. The few minutes at the starting post had always been more or less of a nightmare to him; the sahibs used such bad language, and jostled so. He had always started at the tail end of the procession, leaving the front seats to the jockey sahibs. Now they told him to move up in front, and were deuced polite to each other—most sacrificing in keeping their horses in the background, out of the other fellow's way. The sahibs were a mighty queer lot anyway, Abdul thought, quite mad, all of them.

When the flag fell, Abdul cut out the running with Pegu at a furious clip. He would stay in front of the sahibs as long as he could.

Blake took a pull at Amir's head.

"What are you waiting for?" called out Scotty on Rocket.

"I thought it was a false start," answered Blake, "seeing you hanging back there."

"Oh, the start's all right," said Scotty, angrily. "Go on!"

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"All right, come along then," yelled Blake, letting go of Amir's head a little.

They were only cantering; and all the time the iron-gray Pegu, with the black boy on his back, was slipping away from them. People in the stand, seeing the state of things, thought it was a false start, and bantered cheerfully over the idiocy of the native boy, Abdul. "It doesn't make any difference," some one said, "Pegu had no chance, anyway."

Tobyn saw the gray opening up a wide stretch of country between himself and the other two horses, and going up to Larraby, congratulated him upon his perspicacity. "By Jove!" he exclaimed, "you're a good one at picking them. They'll never catch Pegu now. I suppose you've backed it yourself."

Larraby's face was a study; but the Babe didn't notice this—he never explored faces.

Down on Amir, Blake was swearing softly to himself. At last he spoke:

"Why the devil don't you go on, Scotty? Can't you see that native slipping away from us? He's got twenty lengths the best of it now."

"I'm ridin' 'cordin' to orders," answered Scotty sulkily. "Go on yourself."

"Did the old man order you to throw the race

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away?" queried Blake, petulantly, wrenching at Amir's mouth.

"He told me not to throw it away by makin' the runnin' fer you."

While they wrangled, and their horses jumped sideways, like a lady's palfrey because of their noses being pulled down on their chests, Abdul was stealing away into the distance like a soft, gray shadow. Luckily for him he never looked back in any race so long as he was ahead, but kept pegging away like a true native. All the time he thought the sahibs were at his heels, ready for a surprise rush by him as they swept into the straight. And into the straight, and still no sign of the sahibs. What if his mount should win! He had put ten rupees on him with the bookmakers. The odds, twenty to one, had tempted him; besides, was it not the horse he was going to ride—and had he not ten rupees of confidence in himself.

A serious problem had opened up for the other two boys to consider. Because of astral communication Blake knew that his employer would win if Rocket won; and Scotty also knew that Amir's winning would benefit his master. Also were the jockeys in the same boat, because of arrangement.

Then the third factor in the problem appeared,

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or in point of fact was disappearing—the native boy on Pegu. Blake saw this and realized that he would have to, at least, save second money. If Rocket would not go on, he would have to, so he set sail for the leader. Scotty followed. They made up ground rapidly; but the gray hung on surprisingly. Would they ever catch him?

In the stand the excitement was terrific. Nobody had backed Pegu—nobody but the Babe. It was the stand against the Babe; the fast horses against the dead one; the jockeys against the native boy.

It was tragically unique, this race of the wise men against the lambs.

Jump by jump Amir and Rocket reduced the lead the gray outcast had. Abdul could hear something coming now—something thundering along behind him, still far enough away that he need not pull out, as he always had done. It was not far to the winning post—would the gray last?

He thought of the two hundred rupees he would win, and swore by Allah that he would give half of it in charity, if Allah would only breathe into the nostrils of the gray, and fill his lungs with strength.

The two jockeys were riding for second place now; that was about all they could see in it.

The stand, mad with excitement, thought they

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were riding to win, thought it was either rare horsemanship—this waiting race—or else stupidity. If the native won, it would be stupidity; if either of the jockeys won, his backers would label it “splendid horsemanship.”

It *was* stupidity.

As the gray just tottered under the wire first, the other two finished like lions, nose and nose in a dead heat, for second money.

Then pandemonium broke loose in the stand. All the backers' money was burnt up—no, not all; “Babe” Tobyn had eighteen thousand to draw out of the flames.

There he stood, the only winner among all those clever racing men: the Babe.

Imagination needs no word prick to picture what the owners of Amir and Rocket thought and said.

Down at the Mess that night there was no hilarity when Babe walked in; only the hush of awe.

Such luck as that clearly indicated the finger of Allah. He had passed through his novitiate, and they were abashed.